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PAST & PRESENT

No.54

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# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT □

No. 54

ISSN 0268-8328

November 1992



Our front cover illustration is a detail from Chris Collingswood's painting 'For King and Kingdom'. We shall be reviewing this artist's work in our December issue.

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by  
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### The artist

Having graduated from the Berkshire College of Art in 1970 Chris went into animation. In 1976 he became a full time book jacket illustrator and many will be familiar with his style since his work is constantly on the bookshelves. Perhaps his most widely known painting is the striking image used as the principle promotional device by the Jorvik Viking Centre at York. A collector of arms and armour, Chris has made a lifelong study of military matters and has a commanding interest in the 17th century which has led to this, his first historical limited edition print.

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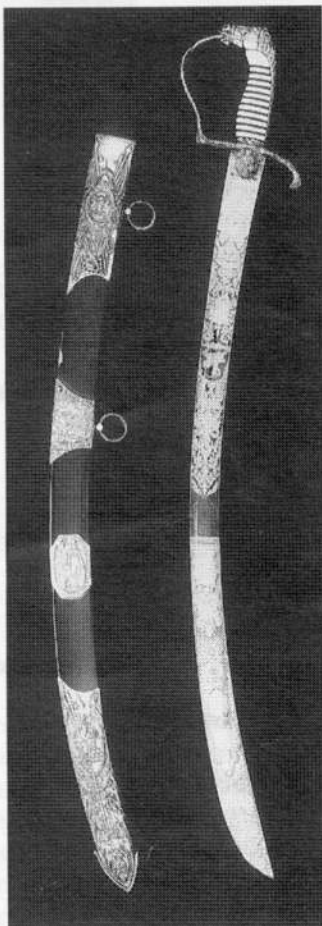
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## THE AUCTION SCENE



*A superb presentation sword dated 1806 and given to a Captain Kerr by members of the Northampton Volunteer Cavalry. The unit, judging by the records, was only small but its members were presumably wealthy for the sword is of outstanding quality approaching that of Lloyd's swords.*

AUGUST IS regarded by most auctioneers as a dead period. Time to carry out maintenance, check accounts, tidy up and hopefully prepare for the coming season. The 1992/3 auction season in arms, armour and militaria is opening with a rush of sales and over the next month or so the state of the market will be tested in depth. There are some very fine items coming onto the market which means that the dealers are going to be hard pressed trying to decide on their priorities. Most do not have the cash to buy many high-priced lots which means that a choice has to be made. One of the main considerations has to be given to the time that it is likely to take to sell on the various purchases. Each unsold item in a dealer's stock represents cash tied up and not available for other purchases. Unlike museums, dealers, and to a lesser degree collectors, have to back their judgements with their own money.

One event which always makes September and early October attractive to the auction rooms is the London Arms Fair which is always held late in September. This well-established event attracts

many overseas buyers and collectors to London and while they are here they can usually be persuaded to come along and view the sales and so be encouraged to leave bids even if they are not going to be here for the actual sale. (Incidentally, the proliferation of arms fairs on the Continent has created another difficulty for dealers. Which event to attend? It is also equally difficult for fair organisers to select dates that do not clash with another fair and one or two of the regular visitors and exhibitors from the London Arms Fair will be absent as there is a fair in Berlin and many are keen to sound out the prospects of a potentially new market.)

The next few weeks (as I write) will be remarkable for the number of good sales taking place, each with some particular quality or content to appeal to dealers and collectors. The south-east is particularly well endowed, starting with Sotheby's military sale on 17 September. This is one of the currently popular theme-type sales which offers pictures, books, medals and arms and armour all in the single sale. There are some 36 pictures, some 150 medals and over 250 lots of arms, armour and militaria. As always the range of estimates goes from £100 or so up to £8,000.

By chance the two outstanding items are both of Indian origin. One is a fine flintlock pistol from the armoury of Tipoo Sultan. This Indian prince was a constant thorn in the side of the English until his final defeat and death at the battle of Seringapatan in 1799. He had a long-standing interest in weapons and an almost fanatical admiration

of the tiger for he used the theme of tiger stripes as the main decorative motif on his weapons. This rare pistol has a fine tiger head butt cap and there are other tiger features in the decoration. By chance there is also a dagger from the same source. The other outstanding object from India is the elaborate helmet of an officer of the Indian Artillery and dating from about 1820. Despite the rusted state of its carrying case, the helmet is in almost mint condition with badge and plume.

Sotheby's are holding a similar theme sale of aviation material at their rooms at Billingshurst in Sussex and the outstanding lot of that sale is an important Victoria Cross group which is confidently expected to realise a record price. The VC was won by the First World War ace fighter pilot Mick Mannock with 73 victories recorded. There are other much lower-priced objects including flying clothing, books and a fascinating autobiography of the great RAF commander, Lord Dowding, written by him in response to a request for information about his life.

On 23 September Christies were to have offered the second selection from the historic German arsenal of the Princes zu Salm-Reifferscheidt-Dyck. It includes many fine weapons, particularly numerous wheel-locks and early flintlock guns and pistols. Among these lots are some superbly decorated powder flasks as well as great rarities such as the eight-barrelled wheel-lock pistol. Estimates range from £250 to £35,000 and if the first sale is any indication these figures will be exceeded. Once again the cata-

logue is beautifully illustrated and presented.

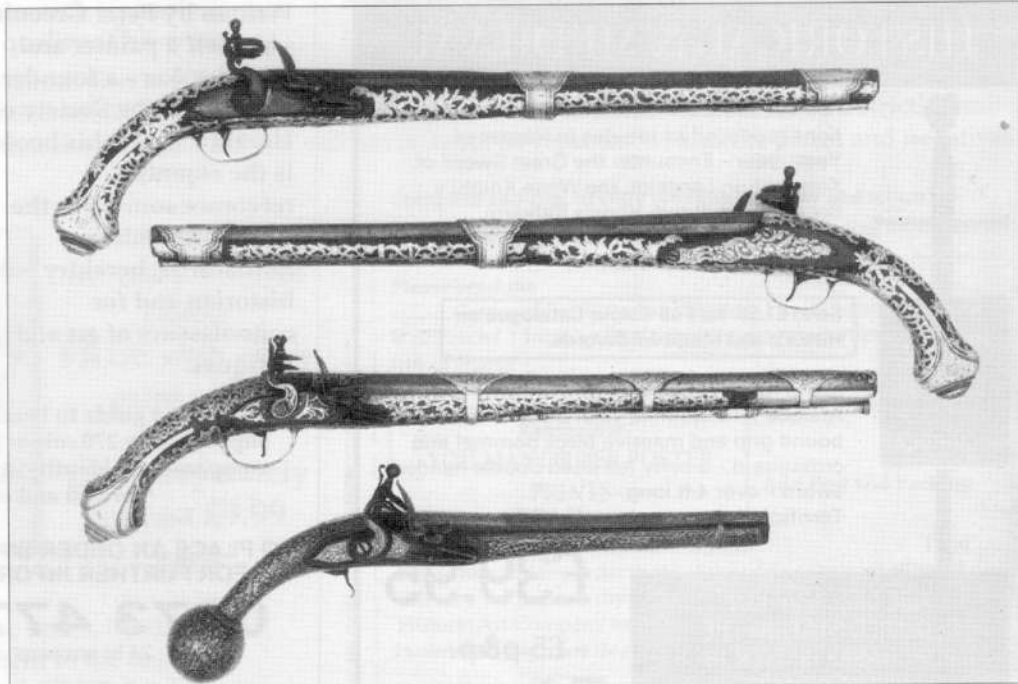
More within the price range of the average collector are the lots in the Kent Sale although, as promised, this has some very fine lots including a rare Yeomanry Tarleton helmet estimated at £4,500 to £5,000. However, as always, the majority of items are estimated at very reasonable figures.

Wallis and Wallis will be holding one of their Connoisseur Sales as they do after each London Arms Fair. These sales achieve some outstanding prices and this one will almost certainly continue the habit.

Weller and Dufty of Birmingham had a sale on 22 September with over 1,100 lots which included an extremely fine pair of flintlock revolvers by the London maker Henry Nock. These rooms always offer an incredibly wide range of goods from a few rounds of ammunition up to articles such as these revolvers. Their forte is firearms and modern and vintage examples in particular but their catalogues are always worth checking for the antique arms and armour and militaria.

Phillips have a sale early in October and in November Bonham's have a sale of arms and armour. The dealers are going to be worn out by the middle of the month. However, this flood of sales could prove beneficial for the collector since the caution that dealers will probably have to exhibit could mean that there may well be less opposition on some of the run-of-the-mill objects. Certainly the range of items on offer is very big and there will most certainly be a quiet period after the next hectic month or so.

**Frederick Wilkinson**



**Top:** A pair of very decorative flintlock pistols made for the Turkish market and well decorated with silver tracery and incorporating the star and crescent motif. **Middle:** Another Turkish pistol, slightly unusual in having a separate ramrod since most similar pistols are usually made without a ramrod. **Bottom:** One of a pair of uncommon pistols usually believed to be Persian and unusual in having no trigger guards. From Sotheby's sale, 17 September 1992. (All photographs courtesy Sotheby's.)



**Video releases to buy**  
**Wars in Peace — Korea/**  
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**Pilot Stories — Heroes of the**  
**Gulf** (DMS Video)  
**Pilot Stories — Eagles Over the**  
**Gulf** (DMS Video)  
**Spitfire Over Australia**  
 (Odyssey)  
**War Story** (Odyssey:15)

K-TEL HAVE released three more titles in the *Wars in Peace* series, which deals with conflicts since the Second World War. Like the previous releases (reviewed *MI/49*), the film footage has been largely taken from ITN film archives, and each is narrated by an ITN reporter. Each tape lasts just over an hour.

One tape concerns conflict in South-East Asia. In the first part, *Korea*, Jeremy Thompson begins by summarising the events that led to the dividing of the country at the 38th parallel. The tape deals with the invasion of the south, the withdrawal of the mainly American United Nations forces to the Pusan perimeter, MacArthur's audacious landings at Inchon, and the stalemate after the intervention by the Chinese.

In the second part, titled *Vietnam*, Sandy Gall begins with the ejection of the French by the Viet Minh, led by General Giap. He then describes the increasing American involvement from the presence of

'military advisors' to a full-scale commitment after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The success or otherwise of American policies such as the forced relocation of villages, use of defoliants, 'Search and Destroy' operations, and bombing offensives are considered.

The second tape deals with two Arab-Israeli wars. In the first part, *The Six-Day War*, Nicholas Owen explains the origins of the hostilities between the Arab states and Israel, the attempt by the former to destroy Israel in 1947, and the Israeli invasion of Egypt during the Suez Crisis in 1956. Footage courtesy of the Israeli Defence Ministry shows the extraordinary pre-emptive attacks by the Israeli Air Force on Egyptian airfields, and the savage fighting round Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. In the second part, *Yom-Kippur*, Michael Nicholson shows how lack of preparations and over-confidence by Israel led to heavy losses in the opening phases of the war. It includes interesting film, albeit reconstruction, showing the innovative methods used by the Egyptians to cross the national obstacle of the Suez Canal and pierce the Bar Lev line in the opening phases. The footage includes the massive tank battles in the Sinai desert, and Israeli planes being shot down by Egyptian SAM missiles.

## ON THE SCREEN

*The Gulf War* begins where the previously released *Iran/Iraq* left off, with the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's forces. In the first part, Alastair Stewart deals with Operation *Desert Storm*, the bombing offensive against Iraq, and includes interviews with British and American pilots. The second part deals with Operation *Desert Sabre*, the invasion of Iraq. Most of the footage is familiar from news broadcasts of under two years ago: one wonders how long it will take before footage taken, for example, from the nose of an attack helicopter, or during the destruction of Iraqi fleeing from Kuwait along the Basra road, is allowed to be seen by the public.\*

Each of the tapes is well produced, gives brief details of opposing commanders and compares significant weapons. Maps are used to illustrate strategy.

The air war over the Gulf features in two further tapes. *Pilot Stories — Heroes of the Gulf* consists mainly of shots of an RAF Jaguar squadron based at Coltishall, Norfolk, while on the soundtrack pilots recount their combat experiences. *Pilot Stories — Eagles Over the Gulf* features a variety of American warplanes apparently on duty in the Gulf. However, there is little combat footage compared to endless shots of aircraft taxiing, taking off

and landing from airfields or aircraft-carrier flight-decks. The soundtrack again consists mainly of pilots recounting their experiences but includes cockpit recordings of actual combat.

*Spitfire Over Australia* is a documentary about Spitfires flown by the RAF and RAAF against the Japanese from bases round Darwin. It features both archive footage and interviews with former pilots who recall their encounters with the Japanese. The theme is brought up to date with a look at Colin Pay's loving restoration of a Spitfire HF Mk VIII and his collection of aircraft which also includes a Mustang, Curtis Kittyhawk and a rare Nakajima Oscar. The video ends with a look at the Confederate Air Force at their home at Harlingen, Texas.

Odyssey are also re-releasing their two *War Story* videos (reviewed *MI/21* and *MI/24*) in a double pack. The six half-hour stories depict different aspects of the Vietnam war, with an emphasis on intelligent drama rather than action.

Stephen J. Greenhill

\*Some footage of this type of material does appear in the video *Gulf Victory: The Nation's Finest*. The film is available, price £14.99 (plus £2 p&p in the UK, £2.50 overseas), from Ian Allan Mail Order, Bookpoint Ltd, 39 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4TD. Ed.

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- 374 20th March
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- 375 1st May
- 376 12th June
- 377 24th July
- 376 28th August
- CONNOISSEUR COLLECTOR'S AUTUMN SALE 16th August
- 379 9th October



# The 15th or King's Light Dragoons (Hussars) (2)

NEIL LEONARD

IN THIS second article on the 15th Light Dragoons, we examine the part they played at Corunna and Sahagun and look at some more meticulously reconstructed uniforms.



The famous red shako introduced in 1812, whilst the regiment was in the Peninsula. The new shakos did not arrive until early in 1813, and appear to have had white lace top bands and wheels, although some sources mention yellow.

THE CORUNNA campaign and resulting retreat was a major disaster for the British Army, even though it included the brilliant cavalry action at Sahagun — the regiment's principal battle honour — and showed the mettle and determination of the British soldier in adversity.

The campaign concluded in the battle of Corunna, which was successful in so much as it kept the French at bay long enough for the Army to scramble aboard the waiting transports back to Britain. The battle cost Sir John Moore his life, but could be ranked as the Dunkirk of its day. The Army however, 'barely escaped with its honour intact' according to one officer, with the men champing at the bit to be allowed to get at the enemy throughout the whole of the retreat, but being restrained until the final battle at Corunna.

As for the cavalry, it was probably the most disastrous campaign they ever embarked upon. Because of the lack of transports available at Corunna, the troopers were ordered to use their pistols and dispatch their erstwhile companions, their horses, to deny their use to the French. This proved to be an extremely unsatisfactory method, and resulted in large numbers of horses dashing about the beach mad with pain. The troopers were then ordered to use their sabres to slit the



A 15th Hussar circa 1808. Watercolour by Robert Deighton once owned by the Duke of Cumberland, the regiment's CO from 1801-1826.

throats of these noble beasts and leave the carcasses piled in their hundreds on the shoreline to be washed out to sea. It was a brutal and shocking end to the troop horses of the 15th who had charged so well at Sahagun and carried their riders throughout the campaign.

The account of the exploits of the 15th King's Own Light Dragoons (Hussars) relies heavily on the hand-written notes of the adjutant's journal, which only came to light via some extraordinary luck back in 1905, when a certain Captain Charrington, 15th Hussars, was returning to the regiment in India after a period of leave in England. A fellow passenger on board the P&O steamer they were travelling on, a Mr A. Williams, mentioned to him the fact that he had purchased an old set of manuscript diaries in 25 volumes at a secondhand bookshop.

## THE FREIKORPS

I enjoyed David Littlejohn's article on the Freikorps (M1/50) and thought readers might be interested to know that the photos at the tops of pages 16 and 18 show men wearing the steel helmet developed for supply to the Ottoman Turkish army (*Türkischer Helm von vorne*) because their religious beliefs prohibited the wearing of visors on any headgear because they might interfere with their prayer posture.

Thomas McGuirl, New York

## BRITISH RESISTANCE

I first became aware of this counter-invasion organisation (M1/32 and 53) in September 1940 when I was on the signal staff at the Special Training Centre, Lochailort, in Invernesshire. At that time I had two Humber Snipe wireless trucks.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

One day, I was sent for by the Commandant who handed me over to two senior Warrant Officer instructors, who in turn began loading one of my Snipes with Tommy Guns, explosives and grenades. I was then told to drive down to Whitehall - more than a thousand-mile round trip - and deliver the lot to a Colonel Cobbins. We got a whiff of what it was all about shortly afterwards when two of our senior instructors - Peter Fleming and Mike Calvert - disappeared to join the Auxunits in Kent.

I must pull you up on the misprint of 'Fairburn' for 'Fairbairn'. Fairbairn's book was actually produced by us at Lochailort and he and his close friend Sykes designed the Fighting Knife while there in early

1942. Finally, I must point out that Fairbairn and Sykes had both served with the Shanghai police force, the most famous in the world prior to World War II, and not 'in the seamier areas of Hong Kong'.

Lt-Col A.F. Austen,  
Towester, Northants

## ROMAN LEGIONARIES

In Part 4 of his excellent series on reconstructing Roman legionary equipment (M1150), Daniel Peterson argues that the legionary's uniform tunic was probably red, citing the 'guard' in the 'Magistrates Court' mural from Pompeii. Perhaps because he has not studied the whole, Mr Peterson seriously mistakes the position.

The mural shows not one

armoured soldier but three (plus a goup in the background who are merely shadows). And while one wears red, the other two clearly wear white tunics with bronze helmets and armour. The soldier in red is closest to the 'magistrate's dias; one of the white-clad figures and the 'shadows' stand behind him. While he may be a 'guard', his position is appropriate to the commander of a squad of guards; and, since he may have the silvered armour of a centurion, this implies that rankers wore white tunics and junior officers red.

Mr Peterson's point on the impracticality of white tunics for campaigning in armour is well taken, but it may be worth pointing out that such armoured troops as the knights of the Teutonic Order and the Temple apparently found white suitable.

Duncan Head, Reading,  
Berks





**Above:** A reconstructed Hussar private in campaign dress similar to that which a private of the 15th would have worn at the Battle of Sahagun in the winter of 1808. This particular photograph was taken at the rear of the 15th/19th Hussars' Museum, and the model carries an original 1796 pattern sabre which was removed from its display case especially for this shot. This particular sabre was carried by the regiment at Sahagun and bears the marks of some heavy use.

**Above right:** An oil painting held in the Joicey Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne, which shows off to fine effect the tall busby reputed to be universally disliked by the Hussars. Upon the return of the regiment to Britain after the Corunna campaign this head-dress was somewhat modified, via a reduction in height to 8½in and the introduction of chinscales.



The diaries are written by a number of different persons, and cover the period 1794-1816. They are written in an official form and cover a minutiae of detail spreading a great deal of light as to how a cavalry regiment functioned at this period in time. They consist of numerous regimental orders, findings of courts martial, note the huge range of petty offences and misdemeanours that the men were punished for. They contain an immense amount of detail that otherwise would have been lost forever.

Over the period of the Corunna campaign it seems likely that the journal was kept by Adjutant Lieutenant Charles Jones; further evidence for this appears because the journal is written in a different hand shortly after the affair at Sahagun during which Adjutant Jones was wounded by a sabre cut to the face. He

complains about this because of the cheaply manufactured busbys, mentioned as being made of pasteboard, without an iron hoop as in the case of the French, which might have prevented his wounding. Adjutant Jones resumed the care and upkeep of the diary a few days after Sahagun as the writing is continued in the same hand as prior to the battle. Thanks to Captain Charrington and Mr A. Williams, the journal is now back in the hands of the Regimental Museum at Fenham in Newcastle.

From the journal we know that the 15th King's Light Dragoons (Hussars) began their involvement in the Corunna campaign when the regiment marched by squadrons from Epping to Stratford on 20 October 1808, collecting baggage from Romford on its march to Portsmouth. The first squadrons arriving in

Portsmouth on the 28th were followed by the rest on the 30th; that some day they were embarked aboard 36 transports, mainly sloops. The regiment then sailed for Corunna on 2 November with an escort from the frigate HMS *Endymion*.

A cavalry regiment embarking for campaign overseas in the 1800s must have presented an administrative nightmare. We know from the diary that the adjutant had to personally visit each of the transports with instructions for the voyage to Corunna, and that after the first day at sea the convoy became split up during the night. The transport *Nelson* which was serving as the headquarters ship, became separated along with ten other vessels, and intermingled with another convoy heading for Africa. HMS *Endymion* disappeared over the horizon with only 20 or so



of the original 36 ships in the convoy.

On 3 November Colonel Grant, who commanded the regiment and was sailing with the headquarters ship, collected a total of 16 vessels which had become separated from the main convoy during the night, by a combination of flag signals and guns. He tried to persuade the ships' masters to go on to Corunna without an escort, but they collectively refused and forced Colonel Grant to lay-to off Torbay until an escort ship could be obtained from the Admiralty. Colonel Grant's part of the convoy then sailed to Plymouth to apply to the Admiralty for another escort, which was duly organised in the form of the schooner HMS *Nonpareil*.

This part of the convoy eventually arrived off Corunna on 9 November but, due to a violent storm and a fog-bound coast, the *Nelson* was unable to make port, the rest of the convoy was dispersed and the *Nelson* was in great danger of sinking because of the leaks she had sprung. The *Nelson* lay off Corunna for a further six days in foul weather, eventually getting into port on Tuesday, 15 November 1808, whereupon the horses were quickly disembarked. It appears that the rest of the convoy arrived in port safely, the *Nelson* being the last to enter and disembark the horses — which, we can tell from the journal of Captain Alexander Gordon, 15th Hussars, were in a deplorable state. Captain Gordon describes the bay of Corunna as being 'crowded with shipping; and the fleet, with the 7th and 10th Light Dragoons and two troops of Horse Artillery'. Gordon's transport, the *Rodney*, had arrived some days earlier than the *Nelson*. Even so, the horses were obliged to remain on board the transports because of the lack of stabling facilities. 'This delay proved very detrimental to the horses, and they fell off rapidly in point of condition, many of them lost the use of their legs for a time and some were rendered quite unserviceable.' Amazingly enough considering the time of year and the terrible weather conditions, the 15th arrived in Spain intact and, apart from the brief capture of a transport by a French privateer which was eventually forced to relinquish the prize by one of the escort ships, the transportation of the regiment was unremarkable.

After the final disembarkations the regiment was eventually quartered in the Corunna

and St Lucia Barracks, with the officers being billeted on the local inhabitants. There followed a round of courts martial of a number of privates for offences ranging from 'mutinous behaviour' and 'much drunkenness', sentences being carried out at the watering order parade in the barracks.

As the horses recuperated from the effects of the winter sea crossing the regiment prepared to meet the enemy. The time was spent organising mules for the carriage of the regiment's baggage and foraging for provisions for the expected advance, the routes for which were planned beforehand by dispatching an officer with a Spanish guide to arrange cantonments all along the line of march — Betanzos,

Vaymonde, Lugo, Constantin, Nogales and so on. Meanwhile, advance parties were organising hay for the horses and provisions for the men either by purchase or by commandeering. On an advance such as this one at the beginning of winter no effort was spared in trying to get both men and horses under cover for the night. Churches, convents and large halls were the natural choices for such large numbers of men and horses. Even through this the courts martial continued, offences such as 'drunkenness' and 'improper language' appearing constantly in the adjutant's journal, along with the constant round of reconnaissance picquets, foraging duties and patrols, as the Army pushed forward.

The first sight of the enemy took place at a place called Villa Braxima on 17 December, when a patrol led by Colonel Grant and the adjutant discovered about 700 French cavalry escaping from the opposite gates of the town to which they had entered.

### SAHAGUN

The 15th Regiment along with the 10th Regiment (Hussars) and part of the horse artillery, under the command of Lord Paget (later the Earl of Uxbridge), marched from Villa Pando to Mayorga; a distance of some 30 English miles. They arrived in the teeth of a howling snowstorm, the enemy having only just quitted the town a few hours before. The regiments arrived about 8 o'clock at night and remained saddled throughout the rest of the night. A Lieutenant's picquet was posted three miles in advance of the main position within the walls of a convent. In the morning they pushed on to Melgar de

Arriba in the intense cold, where the commanding officers and adjutants assembled for Lord Paget's instructions for a night attack against the French, thought to be about 699 strong, in the town of Sahagun.

The march was to take place at 1 o'clock in the morning, in consequence of which no bugles were to be sounded, the men would have to be assembled in silence with no calls for 'boots and saddles'. This resulted in quite a few being left behind in the darkness and confusion.

According to Lieutenant Adjutant Jones, 'the night was one of the coldest ever known in Spain, and the snow very deep, the distance about 15 English miles. Crossed several small rivers on the ice which from the severe cold was capable of bearing guns. The 10th and the artillery were to have arrived at Sahagun at 6am on the 21st December and the 15th at the same time, to prevent their [the French] escape to Palencia.'

At about this time an advanced guard of the 15th captured a small picquet on a bridge near Sahagun. However, two of them escaped to warn the main body of the approach of the enemy, thus the French were able to form up and try to make their escape.

As the first light of dawn began to make an appearance in the east, the 15th formed open column of divisions and trotted parallel with the escaping French who, finding that their escape route was being blocked, halted and formed line. Adjutant Jones writes, 'the 15th wheeled into line, gave three cheers, shouted "Emsdorf and victory," which resounded from one end of the line to the other, the bugles sounded the charge which was one of the finest that could be seen and in one instant we were upon the enemy who stood the charge in the most gallant manner'.

Captain Gordon writes of the charge, 'the French were well posted having a ditch in front which they expected to check the impetus of our charge; in this, however, they were deceived. The terrain was intersected by vineyards and crossed by deep ditches, the whole being covered with deep snow with the attack going in just before dawn in a misty twilight.'

The shock of the galloping horses smashing into the static French seems to have immediately ridden down up to 200 of the enemy horsemen with the rest being 'dispersed in every

direction'. About 200 or so escaped to Palencia, the rest were hunted down and charged by small parties of the 15th; the 'foxhunt' had begun. What follows is a description of the attack by another rank rather than an officer, a Sergeant Goldsmith of the 15th Hussars whose handwritten memoirs are held in the museum's collection. He writes: 'We turned out about 375 men besides officers. We marched till about 5 o'clock in the morning when we came to a small village where we surprised a small picquet and took eight prisoners. We continued to march until we could see a large body of French turning out and forming up ready to attack.'

'They formed open columns of divisions and moved on at a walk, we also formed open columns of divisions and moved on at a trot. The French wheeled into line and gave three cheers of "viva Napoleon". We immediately wheeled into line and gave three Huzzars and charged at the same time.'

'When we were about 40 yards from them they fired a volley on us but they only killed five horses (as I have since heard). We went on at full speed and soon came up with them. They stood firm for a short time, but our carving knives rattled against their brass helmets but we soon found softer places. I never enjoyed more sport, it was like a fox hunt. I really was sorry when it was over as it only lasted an hour and a half. We had the good fortune to bring every man alive off the field, but have had two dead since.'

'The loss of the French was about 12 or 14 killed, 20 horses and about 200 prisoners, 19 of them officers with their colonel commandant, 113 horses besides mules, two waggons loaded with the plunder of the churches. When all was over, Lord Paget thanked us for our behaviour. The number of the French was computed at 800 men, they acknowledged themselves they were 700.'

'They are a remarkable fine set of men and well clothed and much better armed than ours, but are afraid to use them.'

'About 10 o'clock we went into the town of Sahagun and put up our horses, and the inhabitants behaved pretty well to us, they gave us bread and wine and other necessities. In the course of the day Sir John Moore's army joined us at Sahagun, also Sir David Baird's army and the 10th Light Dragoons.'



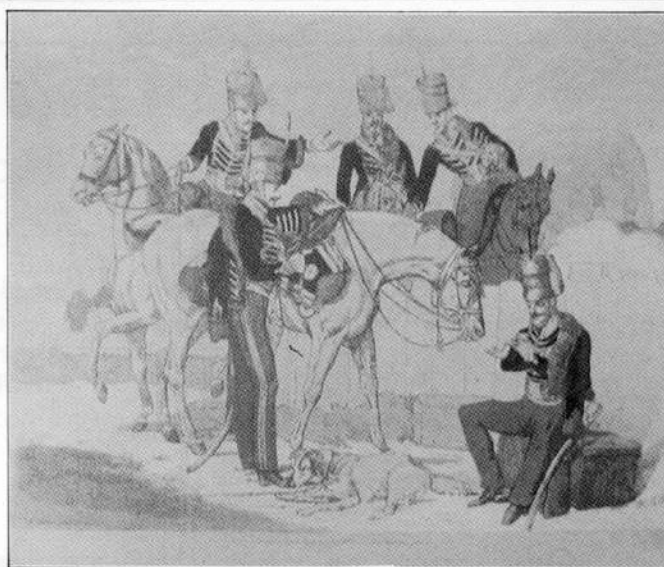
The enemy were the 1st Provisional Regiment of Chasseurs à Cheval and the 8th Dragoons, wrongly mentioned in the adjutant's journal as the 11th Cuirassiers and the 8th Chasseurs and numbering approximately 700 in strength. The 10th Light Dragoons and the Horse Artillery arrived too late to assist in the fighting; indeed squadrons detached to pursue the French fleeing to Palencia were ordered to head off the perceived new threat from Sahagun, and when the mistake was finally discovered it was too late to continue the pursuit.

The *mêlée* was a confused affair in the mist and semi-darkness, making it difficult to distinguish friend from foe, Captain Gordon writes that he almost cleaved the head in two of what he thought was a brother officer, but on reflection decided the man must have been a Frenchman. The *mêlée* according to Gordon lasted only ten minutes but covered almost a mile with British and Frenchmen cutting and slashing at each other all the time. Gordon writes that after he had fallen from his horse, which had floundered in a ditch full of snow, he witnessed what he described as an act of 'wanton cruelty' which was not in his power to prevent. 'A man from Griffiths' troop rode up to a French dragoon, who was lying wounded on the ground, and at his approach raised himself with difficulty to beg for mercy, stripping off his cross-belts at the same time to show that he surrendered. I hallooed to the fellow to spare him, but before I could reach the spot, the villain had split the Frenchman's skull with a blow from his sabre and galloped away.'

After the action at Sahagun the prisoners were collected up and the French baggage was duly looted apart from the two waggons mentioned by Benjamin Goldsmith. The valises of the French were also stuffed with trinkets and ingots which the French had melted down to make more portable. Many a Hussar got his share of the loot, the field soon became littered with personal letters, pieces of clothing, and other personal items of no value to the troopers of the 15th. The wounded were collected and the dead left where they had fallen.

The officers of the French dragoons and chasseurs tried to explain their action, arguing that they had thought that the 15th were Spanish cavalry — who never charge home —

*The modified busby. As previously mentioned it was now worn with the addition of chin scales. (Oil painting circa 1815, 15th/19th Museum.)*



and had they known that they were faced by the British they would have acted differently.

A few days after the fight at Sahagun a squadron led by Captain Gordon passed over the field where the action of the 21st had taken place. The field was still strewn with the corpses of the dead Frenchmen which the peasants had stripped naked and left for the wolves and carrion birds to feed on; it was reported to Gordon that the body of a woman had been found amongst their number.

On the 22nd the 15th marched to Villa Peschenel with the rest of the Army to attack Marshal Soult, but Soult's position was too well defended and the attack was called off. The prisoners were marched under escort to Lugo on the 24th, the same day that secret orders were despatched for the Army to begin its retreat towards Galicia, with the sick and wounded being sent on to Benevente ahead of the main army. The hussar brigade remained on outpost falling back on Sahagun.

Christmas day 1808 the 15th spent at Sahagun. The weather was freezing and Adjutant Jones mentions in the journal that, while laying down on the ground awaiting the arrival of some picquets, his wet clothes were stuck to the ground with the cold.

The retreat wore on with the 15th on virtual constant duty as the rearguard, putting great strain on the horses. Great numbers had to be shot at Villa Valderas, and lame mules and horses from five regiments of cavalry, the horse artillery and the various transports were butchered to stop them falling into the hands of the French. The same happened at the next

stop, San Christoval, when those unable to keep up were slaughtered.

On the 29th the French tried to cross the Esla with the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard. The Adjutant of the 15th saw from the church steeple at San Christoval that 'several squadrons of these cavalry swam the river only to be received by the rearguard consisting of the picquets of the 18th Light Dragoons and the 3rd German Hussars numbering about one hundred, only they were, however, quickly joined by the inlying picquet and some horse artillery, and succeeded in keeping the Chasseurs at bay until the whole of the cavalry and horse artillery were brought into the action, whereupon the French recrossed the Esla. The 18th and the 3rd Germans lost between sixty and seventy wounded and killed, only three privates of the 15th were involved in the action one of whom was shot and killed. The losses of the French were about 30 killed and 70 made prisoner amongst whom was their General Lefebvre-Desnouettes.'

The retreat dragged on through very bad weather, with night marches and constant pressure from the French. The Army arrived at La Baneza during the night, destroying large amounts of stores as they left. Ammunition, waggons and caissons were all burned as had happened previously with the magazines at Benevente, and more mules and horses were shot in the streets, their carcasses obstructing the roads along with the smouldering remains of the caissons and waggons.

The retreat carried on with some skirmishing occasionally taking place at the outposts.

The roads in winter were in a deplorable state. Captain Gordon comments in his journal on the roads along the line of the retreat, with carts, waggons and coaches containing Spanish families, and waggons full of wounded soldiers all stuck in the deep snow making very little progress. The 15th passed through the burnt-out village of Mauregatos which had been set alight by the fleeing infantry and completely destroyed by fire. The bodies of several Spaniards lay scattered around the ruins, men had died of hunger and through the inclemency of the weather.

Apart from the small action at Cacabelos on the 2nd and 3rd of January, the role of the 15th in the Corunna campaign was fast drawing to an end. The retreat went on as did the constant and fatiguing outpost duties and picquets, until the 15th finally reached Corunna on Wednesday, 11 January 1809, where the army took up a position to defend Corunna. Although the outposts were engaged on occasion the 15th were to take no great part in the battle of Corunna. The iron discipline of the 15th continued, with courts martials for the trials of farriers Kelly and Watts for neglect of duty during the march, of Privates Allwood and Smith for plundering and on Ellershaw for losing 500 dollars.

The 15th completed the embarkation of the men and the very few horses that would be transported back to Britain on 16 January, arrived off Portsmouth on 26 January 1809, barefoot and ragged, without horses, and having lost all of their stores, baggage and ammunition. Thus ended the destructive and totally disastrous Corunna campaign. **MI**





**Above:** This gives us a rather good view of the Hussar from the front showing the arrangement of the braid and lace, both of which were supplied by the Wydean Weaving company, and which were specially manufactured in white for the reconstructions. Although the braid and lace are still manufactured to this day for the Royal



Horse Artillery's King's Troop ceremonial uniforms, it was quite a task tracking down the manufacturers.

**Above right:** An excellent view of the rear of the NCO's dolman which more importantly shows how the barrellled sash was fastened.



ALL THE UNIFORMS and regalia of Nazi Germany made effective use of symbolism in their designs, and none more so than those of the SS. One of the most obscure yet most potent of all SS uniform accoutrements was the Totenkopfring der SS, or SS Death's Head Ring, instituted by Heinrich Himmler on 10 April 1934. The Totenkopfring was not classed as a national decoration, as it was the gift of the Reichsführer-SS. However, it ranked as a senior award within the SS brotherhood, recognising the wearer's personal achievement, devotion to duty and loyalty to Hitler and his ideals.

The concept and runic form of the ring was undoubtedly adopted by Himmler from pagan Germanic mythology, which related how the great God Thor possessed a pure silver ring on which people could take oaths (much as Christians swear on the Bible), and how binding treaties were carved in runes on Wotan's spear. The Death's Head Ring comprised a massive band of oakleaves deeply embossed with a totenkopf and a number of symbolic runes. Each piece was cast, then exquisitely hand-finished by specially commissioned jewellers working for the firm of Gahr in Munich, which also made the 'Deutschland Erwache' standard tops for the NSDAP. The ring started off as a strip of silver which was bent circular to the required finger size and then joined at the front. The Death's Head was formed from a separate piece of silver and was soldered to the front to cover the join. The larger the ring, the larger the space between the Death's Head and the two adjacent Sig-Runes. Each completed ring was finely engraved inside the band with the letters 'S.lb' (the abbreviation for 'Seinem lieben' or, roughly, 'To Dear') followed by the recipient's surname, the date of presentation and a facsimile of Himmler's signature.

As regards the runes which featured on the ring, and their symbolism, various historians and collectors have tried to produce their own home-spun ideas as to what these meant. However, the document presented by the SS with each ring described the runes and interpreted them in the following

## 'Lords of the Ring'

### The SS Totenkopfring, 1934-45

ROBIN LUMSDEN

AMONG THE MANY collector's items specifically related to the SS, the Death's Head Ring is one of the most sought-after, and this has resulted in a number of fakes. Here, we examine the real thing in detail and show how to avoid being 'conned'.

way, which, it can be assumed, was their intended meaning:

The Sig-Rune in a triangle stood for membership of the SS; the Swastika in a square

stood for Nazi philosophy; the Heilszeichen in a circle stood for prosperity; and the Hagall-Rune in a hexagon stood for unshakable faith.

The citation which Himmler gave with each ring awarded indicated the above meanings for the runes so that ring wearers, most of whom had no interest whatsoever in runic symbolism, would know what they represented. However, these were rather simplistic interpretations in comparison to those initially intended by the Reichsführer. Himmler was fascinated by Dark Age Germanic history and was



Heinrich Himmler,  
Reichsführer-SS, circa 1941.





The SS Death's Head Ring.



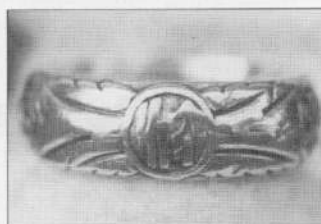
The Totenkopf.



The Sig-Rune in a triangle.



The Swastika in a square.



The Heilszeichen in a circle.



The Hagall-Rune in a hexagon.

completely captivated in the late 1920s by the writings of a former Austro-Hungarian General named Karl-Maria Wiligut-Weisthor, who purported to be an expert on runes and their coded symbolism. Wiligut-Weisthor was given the honorary rank of SS-Brigadesführer on the Persönlicher Stab RfSS and

charged with designing the Death's Head Ring in 1933. Wiligut-Weisthor's rather complicated interpretation of the ring runes was as follows:

#### The Sig-Rune in a triangle

The triangle means life is eternal. The three sides stand for birth/development/death, or past/present/future. Each death is the way to a new life and the triangle symbolises the eternal cycle of creation. The Sig-Rune represents the sun and good health. It was also the pagan symbol of victory. Hence it encompasses both the greeting ('Heil', or 'Good Health') and the battle-cry ('Sieg', or 'Victory') of the Germanic ancestors of the SS. (This combination of ancient greeting and battle-cry gave the Nazis their 'Sieg Heil'.)

#### The Swastika in a square

The Swastika comprises four 'U'-Runes. The 'U'-Rune represents the path of the sun and is symbolic of fertility. A split or halved Swastika results in the 'G'-Rune or Gibor-Rune which means handing down to one's descendants. The total symbolism of this rune is Man being at one with God and Eternity.

#### The Heilszeichen in a circle

In the circle are two Sig-Runes and one combined Tyr-Rune and Os-Rune. The circle stands for the circulation of divinity in nature, which forged the human spirit. It is the Circle of Life. The Sig-Runes stand for the SS and prosperity. The Tyr-Rune is the spear of Tyr, the Norse God of War. This all means that death is powerless and should not be feared. Those who fight bravely to ensure the prosperity of their 'Volk' shall be forever remembered.

#### The Hagall-Rune in a hexagon

All 18 runes derive from the hexagon. Carrying this symbol gives strength over adversity as it encompasses the total power of all the runes. The overall interpretation of this rune is to believe in yourself and you will become master of everything.

Given Wiligut-Weisthor's complicated reading of the runes, it is little wonder that Himmler plumped for the simpler explanation of their meanings as related in the ring citation. Wiligut-Weisthor died in the late 1930s, when Himmler belatedly realised that he had been little more than a crazed charlatan, with no historical training whatsoever.

Initially, the weighty silver ring was reserved primarily for



The correct form of the inscription 'S.l.b.'

those Old Guard veterans with SS membership numbers below 5,000 but qualifications for award were gradually extended until, by 1 August 1939, the following persons were eligible to wear it:

- (i) Members of any rank whose numbers were below 10,000;
- (ii) Officers who joined the SS before 30 January 1933;
- (iii) Officers who joined the SS after 30 January 1933 and had served for three years;
- (iv) Officers who had served for two years, having been prevented from joining the SS earlier than they did because of their membership of the army or police prior to 30 January 1933;
- (v) Officers who had been members of the SS for two years, having transferred directly into the organisation from active uninterrupted service in the NSDAP, SA, NSKK or HJ;
- (vi) Members of any rank holding the Gold Party Badge;
- (vii) Members of any rank holding the Coburg Badge;
- (viii) Officers and NCOs who were members of both

the police and the NSDAP before 30 January 1933;

(ix) Officers who resided in Austria before the Anschluss and were members of the outlawed Austrian SS during that time, provided they had been officers for at least two years;

(x) Officers who resided in the Sudetenland and became SS members before 31 December 1938, provided they had been officers for at least two years;

(xi) Officers who resided in the Memel District and became SS members before 1 June 1939, provided they had been officers for at least two years;

(xii) Members of any rank who did not fulfil any of the above criteria but were classed as 'Special Cases' by the Reichsführer-SS. This category included honorary officials, Germanic-SS leaders and SS men who had performed particularly arduous tasks.

Award of the ring could be postponed for anything between three months and three years if the prospective holder had been punished

The correct form of the engraving of the recipient's name, in this case 'Taschner'.







The date of award, in this case '9.11.42'.

during his service by reprimand, detention or demotion for contravention of the SS Penal and Disciplinary Code. Moreover, SS members who were suspended or being investigated under the Party or SS disciplinary procedures at the time of their becoming eligible for the ring were temporarily excluded from consideration for award.

Certified lists of nominees for the ring, together with their finger sizes, were regularly submitted by SS Abschnitte and Waffen-SS regimental headquarters to the SS Personalhauptamt in Berlin, which processed the applications and duly awarded rings and accompanying citations on behalf of the Reichsführer-SS. Each citation read as follows:

'I award you the SS Death's Head Ring.

'The ring symbolises our loyalty to the Führer, our steadfast obedience and our brotherhood and comradeship.

'The Death's Head reminds us that we should be ready at any time to lay down our lives for the good of the Germanic people.

'The runes diametrically opposite the Death's Head are symbols from our past of the prosperity which we will restore through National Socialism.

'The two Sig-Runes stand for the name of our SS. The Swastika and Hagall-Rune represent our unshakable faith in the ultimate victory of our philosophy.

'The ring is wreathed in oak, the traditional German leaf.

'The Death's Head Ring cannot be bought or sold and must never fall into the hands of those not entitled to wear it.

'When you leave the SS, or when you die, the ring must be returned to the Reichsführer-SS.

'The unauthorised acquisition of duplicates of the ring is forbidden and punishable by law.

'Wear the ring with honour!  
H. HIMMLER'

The ring, which was to be worn only on the ring finger of the left hand, was bestowed on set SS promotion dates, principally 30 January (the anniversary of the Nazi assumption of power), 20 April (Hitler's birthday), 21 June (Mid-



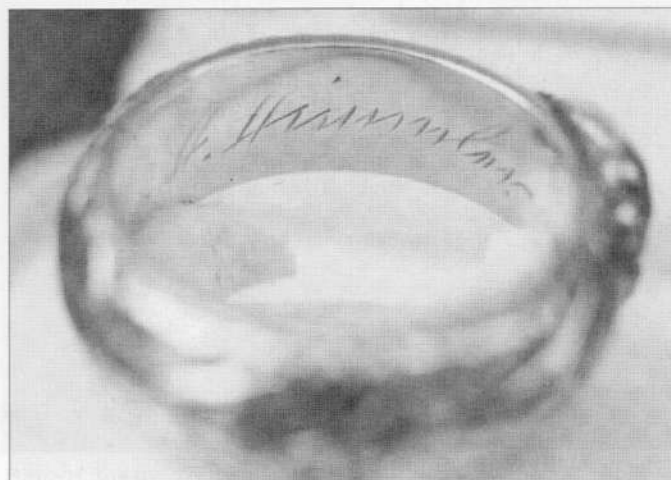
SS-Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, circa 1937. The Death's Head Ring can clearly be seen worn on the left hand, in the prescribed manner.

summer's Day, a traditional pagan and SS festival), and 9 November (the anniversary of the Munich Putsch). All awards were recorded in the Dienstaltersliste and personnel files of the holders, but it was expressly forbidden to publicise presentations in the Press.

All ring holders who were demoted, suspended or dismissed from the SS, or who resigned or retired, had to

return their rings and citations to the SS Personalhauptamt. Those later accepted back into the organisation would again qualify for the ring. When a serving ring holder died, his relatives could retain his citation in its special frame, but had to return his ring to the SS Personalhauptamt, which arranged for its preservation in Himmler's castle at Wewelsburg in permanent commemoration of the holder.




























Himmler with Waffen-SS officers in Russia, 1941. They were instructed that on no account should their rings fall into the hands of the enemy.



The correct form of the signature 'H. Himmler'.





Lfd. Nr.	Name, Vorname	Degen/Zeug	Dienststellung	Partei-Nr.	SS-Nr.	Geburtsdatum	Führer- bzw. Offiz.-Dienstgrad bei der Waffen-SS, Wehrmacht, Polizei	Oberst-Gruppenführer und Obergruppenführer
1	Himmler Heinrich,  R. Mi., R. L., R. K., St. Rat, M. d. R.		Reichsführer-SS u. Chef der Deutschen Polizei	14 303	168	7. 10. 00	Reichsführer-SS	RF SS 6. 1. 29
<b>SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer:</b>								
2	Schwarz Franz Xaver,  R. L., M. d. R.		Stab RF SS	6	38 500	27. 11. 75	Lt. d. R. a. D.	20. 4. 42
3	Dietrich Josef,  u. Brill.  St. Rat, M. d. R.		O.B. 6. SS-Pz. Armee u. F. Oa. Spree	89 015	1 177	28. 5. 92	Pz. Gen. Obst. W. SS	20. 4. 42
4	Daluge Kurt,   St. Rat, M. d. R.		Chef Hauptamt O. P.	81 981	1 119	15. 9. 97	Gen. Obst. d. P.	20. 4. 42
5	Hausser Paul, 		O. B. 7. Armee	4 168 779	239 795	7. 10. 80	Gen. Obst. W. SS	1. 8. 44
<b>SS-Obergruppenführer:</b>								
6	Darré R. Walther,  R. Mi., R. L., St. Rat, M. d. R.		Stab RF SS	248 256	6 882	14. 7. 95	Lt. d. R. a. D.	9. 11. 34
7	Buch Walter,   R. L., M. d. R.		Stab RF SS	7 733	81 353	24. 10. 83	Maj. a. D.	9. 11. 34
8	von Woyrsch Udo,  St. Rat, M. d. R.		Pers. Stab RF SS	182 349	3 689	24. 7. 95	Gen. d. P.	1. 1. 35
9	Krüger Friedrich-Wilhelm,  St. Rat, M. d. R.		Kom. Gen. V. SS Geb. Korps	171 191	6 123	8. 5. 94	Gen. W. SS u. d. P.	25. 1. 35
10	Erbsprinz zu Waldeck und Pyrmont Josias,  M. d. R.		F. Oa. Fulda-Werra u. Höh. SS-Pol. F.	160 025	2 139	13. 5. 96	Gen. W. SS u. d. P.	30. 1. 36
11	Amann Max,  R. L., M. d. R.		Stab RF SS	3	53 143	24. 11. 91	—	30. 1. 36
12	Frhr. von Eberstein Karl,  M. d. R.		F. Oa. Süd u. Höh. SS-Pol. F.	15 067	1 386	14. 1. 94	Gen. W. SS u. d. P.	30. 1. 36

The first page of the SS Dienstaltersliste of November 1944. The circle in the third column denotes an award of the Totenkopfring.

Similarly, if a ring holder fighting with the Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS was killed in action, his ring had to be retrieved from the body by members of his unit and returned by the unit commander to the SS Personalhauptamt for preservation. In effect, the returned rings of dead SS men constituted individual military memorials and were cared for as such at Wewelsburg's ever-growing 'Schrein des Inhabers des Totenkopfringes' or 'Shrine to Holders of the Death's Head Ring'.

The Death's Head Ring became so sought after an honour that many SS and police officers not entitled to wear it had a variety of unofficial 'skull rings' produced in gold and silver by local jewellers and even concentration camp inmates. Others wore their old Death's Head jewellery which had been popular

in the Freikorps days. However, these lacked any runic symbolism and were rather vulgar representations of the real thing.

On 17 October 1944, the Reichsführer-SS cancelled further manufacture and presentation of the Totenkopfring for the duration of the war. In the spring of 1945, on Himmler's orders, all the rings which had been kept in the Shrine were blast-sealed into a mountain-side near Wewelsburg, the precise location of which was kept secret, to prevent their capture by the Allies. To this day, they have never been found. However, the officer in charge of the demolition team which buried the rings, SS-Sturmabführer Heinz Macher of 2nd SS-Panzer Division 'Das Reich', must have been a touch careless for it is recorded that a US army captain of the counter-intelligence corps, one of the first

Allied troops to enter the castle, found (and kept!) a cigar box containing over 200 Death's Head Rings.

Between 1934 and 1944, around 14,500 rings were awarded. As at 1 January 1945, 64% of these had been returned to the SS on the deaths of their holders (ie, those to be buried at Wewelsburg), 10% had been lost on the battlefield, and 26% were either still in the possession of ring holders or otherwise unaccounted for. That would mean that, in theory, about 3,500 rings might have been in circulation at the end of the war. However, there is no doubt that original Death's Head Rings are very rarely seen today. The author of this article knows of only a handful of originals, and it is safe to say that the vast majority of rings offered for sale today are fakes. Reproductions abound, some poor

in quality and others excellent. The prices of these copies range from £5 to £500, and one enterprising dealer in Germany even makes rings to order! Collectors who are offered examples of the ring should beware the following points, which characterise the fakes:

(i) '935' silver hallmark—this did not appear on originals.

(ii) Himmler signatures which are stamped instead of engraved.

(iii) The SS motto 'Meine Ehre heisst Treue' engraved inside the band instead of the proper inscription.

(iv) Sig-Runes at the back of the ring instead of the Heilszeichen.

(v) A blank cartouche at the back of the ring instead of the Heilszeichen.

(vi) Nickel or zinc rings instead of the correct solid silver.



(vii) The totenkopf of the wrong shape, with bones protruding too far out.

(viii) Oakleaves of the wrong shape.

(ix) The inscription inside the band in Gothic script instead of the correct copper-plate handwriting style.

(x) Casting or pock marks.

(xi) An '800' stamp to the top of the totenkopf.

(xii) The teeth of the skull not properly defined—on originals, all the teeth can be counted.

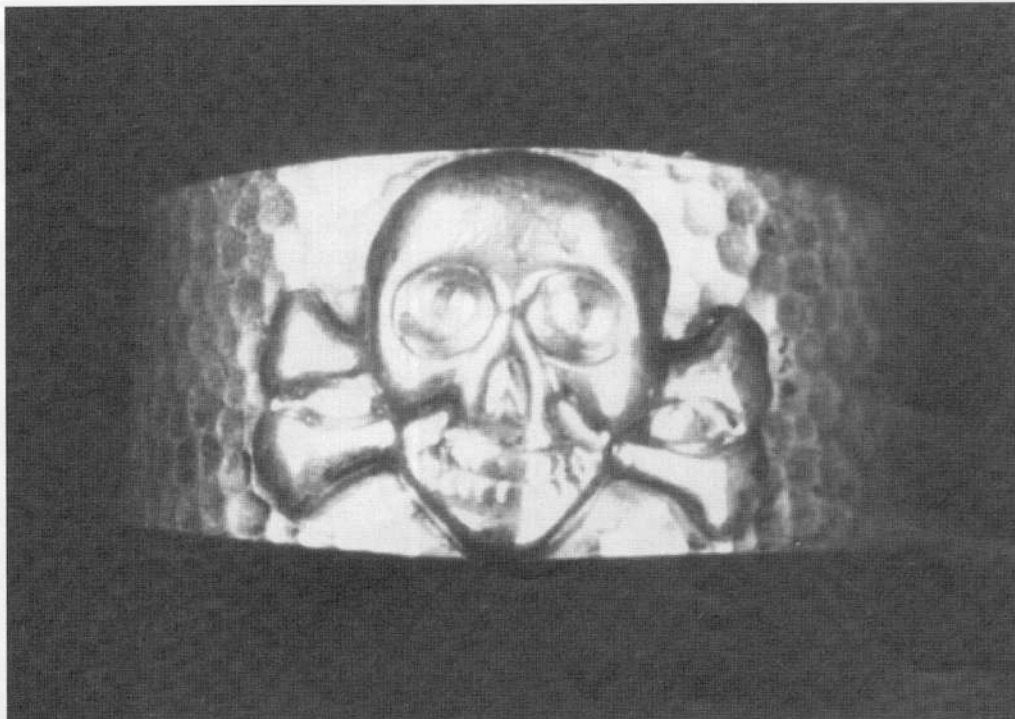
(xiii) RZM or SS proof marks inside the ring—never a feature of originals.

(xiv) The hexagon around the Hagall-Rune mis-shapen.

In short, all original rings will be identical in all respects to the ring photographed with this article. Only the name of the recipient and date of presentation will differ.

Kurt Taschner, whose Totenkopfring is illustrated, had a very interesting SS career which typified those serving simultaneously in both the Allgemeine-SS and the Waffen-SS. Born on 12 September 1909 at Gnesen in Posen District, he joined the SS in 1933 with SS membership number 99,283 and NSDAP number 1,845,543. A professional bank clerk, he was selected to undergo administrative training courses in 1934 and 1935, and on 9 November 1937 was promoted SS-Untersturmführer to become the so-called 'IVa' (Administrative Officer) of the 3rd Sturmabteilung, 61st SS Fuss-Standarte. He thereafter served on the administrative staff of Oberabschnitt Nordost, as IVa of the 61st SS Fuss-Standarte, and then as IVa of Abschnitt VII.

On 15 October 1939, Taschner joined the Waffen-



An original, but unofficial, 'Skull Ring' in gold and silver, of the type popular with SS and Police officers not entitled to the Totenkopfring der SS.

SS as an NCO. He retained his current Allgemeine-SS rank of Obersturmführer, although his position in the Allgemeine-SS was now a temporarily inactive one. On 30 January 1940, after undergoing basic military training, he became Untersturmführer der Reserve in the Waffen-SS, then Obersturmführer der Reserve two months later to bring him back on a par with his Allgemeine-SS status. He was initially stationed in Warsaw, during which time he 'requisitioned' leather and flour for use by his troops, an act leading to his court-martial for looting. After his trial at the SS and Police Court in Krakow, he was cleared of all charges and transferred to become IVa of SS-Totenkopf Infantry

Regiment 11. On 30 January 1942, Taschner was promoted to Hauptsturmführer in both the Waffen-SS and Allgemeine-SS simultaneously, and moved to the administration office of SS-Division 'Das Reich'. The Death's Head Ring was presented to him on 9 November 1942. He served on the Eastern Front for almost two years, on the HQ staff of 'Das Reich' and then as IVa of the 3rd SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 'Deutschland'. On 1 December 1943, he was posted to the SS Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt in Berlin, and on 7 January 1944, became IVa on the staff of the Latvian SS brigade at Mitau in Courland. His last posting was to the Latvian SS Recruiting Depot on 20 December 1944.

The German forces in Courland were cut off by the Russians for the last months of the war, and it is not known if Taschner escaped or perished in the conflict. **MI**

#### Sources and further reading

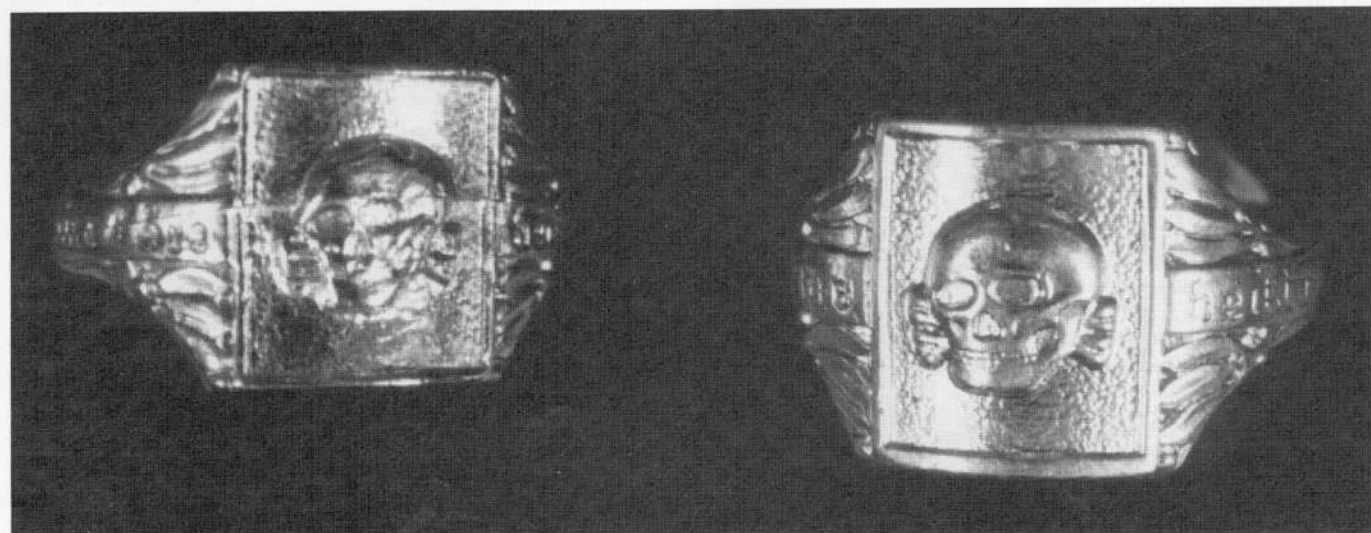
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Post-war 'fantasy' SS Death's Head Rings.



# British Airborne Forces, 1940-42

ANDREW STEVEN and PETER AMODIO

THE GERMAN INVASIONS of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France in April-June 1940 caught the world by surprise; not because they were unexpected, but because of their speed. And part of the shockingly successful formula for Blitzkrieg was the use of parachute and glider-borne troops to seize key airfields and bridges in advance of the ground forces.

In the wake of the evacuation from Dunkerque and the fall of France, with a German invasion of the UK a seeming probability, many people in places high and low raised their eyebrows at the new Force but the first personnel were entrusted to the Royal Air

Training of the new corps was to produce far-reaching results.

Force but the first personnel were chosen from volunteers among 'C' and 'D' Troops of the recently formed No 2

(Army) Commando under Lieutenant-Colonel C.I.A. Jackson, a Royal Tank

Regiment officer. They first mustered at Cambray Barracks, Perham Down, Wiltshire, but a new base was quickly selected at Manchester's Ringway air-

port, with housing at Benchill and a practice landing ground at Tatten Park, while

parachutes themselves were acquired from the experiment-

tal Parachute Flight at Henlow. Thus was the Central Landing School\* established, even though the new corps of

parachutists themselves remain as yet unnamed and there were still enormous prob-

lems to be resolved — not least

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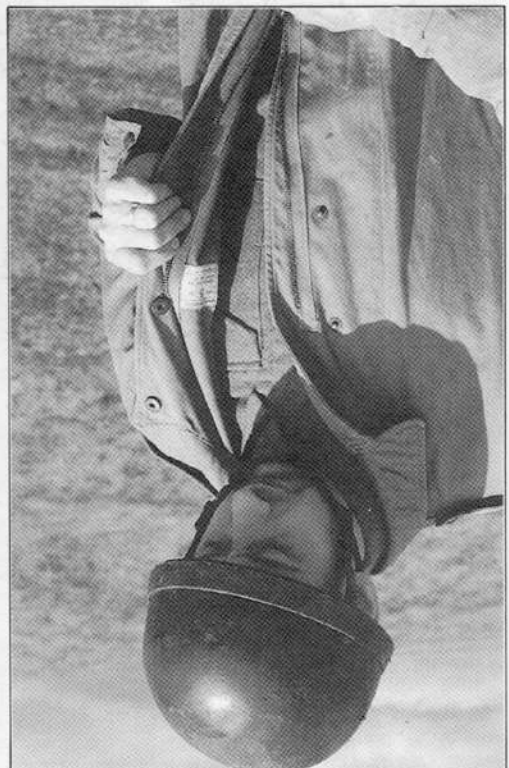
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First pattern smock worn over BD revealing the maker's label on the inside. It was called 'Jacket Parachutist' and a combination of zipper and press studs was used to fasten it shut over the web equipment.



Paratrooper standing with Sten Mk2 and wearing web 37. Photo shows clearly the press stud sleeve fastening. Across his chest is the gas mask case strap.

parachute was not then fully sharp and the X type smock was discarded on land- ing then it would not serve its primary functions. When this problem came to light the over- smock was developed although it was not really used until after 1942. The first oper- ation that could be properly assessed was the Brunel raid in February 1942 (Operation 'Biting'). Men in combat will all function better when they are comfortable! Some of the men discarded their smocks to give them access to their ammunition while others were happier retaining their smocks. During exercises in England men would usually undress from the parachute harness and web and then replace the smock under the web equipment. Many short- comings had been found dur- ing the raid, almost all to do with the equipment.

The 1937 pattern web equipment was standard and was totally inadequate for the airborne troops; the shape was too angular and jutted out very sharply and the X type smock was discarded on land- ing then it would not serve its primary functions. When this problem came to light the over- smock was developed although it was not really used until after 1942. The first oper- ation that could be properly assessed was the Brunel raid in February 1942 (Operation 'Biting'). Men in combat will all function better when they are comfortable! Some of the men discarded their smocks to give them access to their ammunition while others were happier retaining their smocks. During exercises in England men would usually undress from the parachute harness and web and then replace the smock under the web equipment. Many short- comings had been found dur- ing the raid, almost all to do with the equipment.

**GABARDINE JUMP SMOCK (JERKIN)**

amongst them being uniforms and equipment.

of fighting men the world has ever seen.

When WINSTON CHURCHILL called for the cre- ation of a British parachute corps on 22 June 1940, neither he nor anyone else had any idea of what was involved, what the role of the new force was to be, or how they should be dressed and equipped. What no- one could have predicted was that out of this confu- sion would ultimately emerge one of the finest bodies of fighting men the world has ever seen.

The first head protection devel- oped was a form of leather fly- ing helmet. It was very short-

## HELMETS AND HEAD PROTECTION

with the equipment.

ing the raid, almost all to do with the equipment.

During exercises in England men would usually undress from the parachute harness and web and then replace the smock under the web equipment. Many short- comings had been found dur- ing the raid, almost all to do with the equipment.

The smock could be taken off on landing, vastly improv- ing access to the web equip- ment. The jump smock was intended to play many roles, including helping to keep the paratrooper warm and giving his wool tunic some protection from the rain. However, if the smock was discarded on land- ing then it would not serve its primary functions. When this problem came to light the over- smock was developed although it was not really used until after 1942. The first oper- ation that could be properly assessed was the Brunel raid in February 1942 (Operation 'Biting'). Men in combat will all function better when they are comfortable! Some of the men discarded their smocks to give them access to their ammunition while others were happier retaining their smocks. During exercises in England men would usually undress from the parachute harness and web and then replace the smock under the web equipment. Many short- comings had been found dur- ing the raid, almost all to do with the equipment.

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Shortly afterwards renamed the Central Landing Establishment after receipt of a letter addressed to the Central Sunday School! For a fuller description of the myriad other early problems and the rapid and confusing changes of name the fledgling Parachute Regiment went through, readers are recommended to the book *Airborne Assault* by Bruce Quarrie, pub- lished by Patrick Stephens.





Clear photo of early second pattern metal helmet interior showing the yellowish colour of bungy rubber.

lived and replaced by the 'Rubber Bungy' which was covered with gabardine cloth. It took much from the design of the original leather helmet but with the addition of a thick rubber band around the skull and over the cranium. It was secured on the head by ties under the chin. There were also two holes in the sides to improve hearing.

#### The first of the steel helmets, 1941

The introduction of the steel



A set of early pattern airborne sleeve insignia as introduced around 1942. From the earliest days the flying Pegasus badge was associated with the airborne forces: the example shown here is a wool maroon cloth patch and embroidered on it is a flying Pegasus in a very light blue (nearly off-white) thread. Above this are the paratrooper wings: light blue wings with a white open parachute on khaki cloth. The wings went through some changes before the final pattern was developed and the example here is of the third major type. On the shoulder is the early pattern airborne shoulder title: light blue letters and maroon background printed on plain cloth.

helmet took a lot longer than one would have expected. The airborne helmet resembled an RAC dispatch rider's helmet in that the outer manganese shell was the same. The airborne's shell lining was very different: it retained the rubber bungy of the protective helmet but now it was encased under a steel shell. The cloth chinstrap was replaced with much stronger black leather straps each attached at two points, one on the back and one on the side in the conventional position. The first pattern had a hard rubber rim with a lip on it, with a distinct bill at the back. The reason for this bill is not clear. The first pattern helmet has been seen

Good example of a training rubber helmet which was held on firmly by the use of ties under the chin. The studded holes in the sides to make hearing easier are clearly seen. Inside the transport aircraft it was all but impossible to talk to each other because of the aircraft engine noise and buffeting by the air. On his sleeve is a set of jump qualification wings in the later regulation position near the shoulder.



Paratrooper with special shortened Lanchester chest pouches capable of holding three Sten magazines.

in contemporary photographs of the Bruneval Raid.

#### The second pattern steel helmet, 1942

This falls into the classical style that is known today. The first ones had yellow bungy rubber with extra support at the back of the head and the neck. A circle of felt covered in waxed cloth was placed in the centre of crown inside the metal of the helmet. The helmet rested on the head on web support straps pulled together by a 1/8th inch (3mm) thick string. Later helmets had the more commonly seen black bungy rubber. Around the outside of the helmet was a 1 inch (25mm) rubber elastic band which served two functions:

1. To secure the face veil, introduced in 1942. The veil was a piece of netting 3ft x 3ft 6in (300mm x 450mm) which was to be worn over the helmet, dropping down over the front of the helmet and over the face. The face veil was simply

and easily attached all around the helmet by the band. Sack cloth has also been seen, being worn under the band with netting over the top.

2. The rubber band helped to protect the edges of the helmet in the confined space of the aircraft transport.

#### WEAPONS

##### Sten Mk2

At first the airborne forces used the Thompson SMG from America, which fired .45 calibre ammunition. But the British desperately needed a SMG of their own and the airborne forces were one of the loudest voices on this issue; they needed a light weapon that fired a smaller bullet than the Thompson. The Sten gun was the result: lightweight, only 30 inches (76cm) long and easy to use. The gun fired 9mm ammunition with a maximum rate of fire of 500 rpm and used a single feed system which was a constant cause of jamming as dust and dirt got into the unprotected working parts. (The name 'Sten' derives from the initial letters of the inventors' surnames, R. Sheperd and H. Turpin, and the first two letters of the place of origin, Enfield.) The Sten Mk2 was the most commonly produced version but the most famous and well known of the models given to the airborne forces was the Mk5 with its wooden stock and fore-grip.

Training set up with rubber helmet and Lee Enfield No 4 Mk1. From his right shoulder is a respirator bag with the extra straps on the bottom. At his leg, clearly shown, are the press studs for giving the smock a close fit around his legs.





The new Sten gun's magazine did not fit into the standard 37 pattern chest pouches. Special Lanchester web 37 pattern pouches were obtained for the troops as the Lanchester magazine was longer than the Sten and the pouches were modified and cut down to fit.

### Lee Enfield

The standard rifle of the British Army was the Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) dating from 1902. The Lee Enfield had a detachable ten-round magazine with a standard rate of fire of five rounds per minute or 15 rounds per minute rapid fire. The weapon weight was 8.75lb and it was 44.5 inches (113cm) long.

### INSIGNIA

The airborne title was awarded to all members of the force. It was produced in printed as well as embroidered styles on maroon coloured bases.

The formation of airborne forces required proof of jump training so the Army Council Instruction number 1589, dated 28 December 1940, announced a special badge for qualified parachutists. The badge was 'cloth worked with pale blue wings and a white parachute on a drab background'. After much discussion it was decided to qualify for the award the recipient had to complete at least four successful jumps. The award came in different forms and in the early days some came on large sections of cloth and were cut down around the wings and parachute. From February 1941 the regulation stated that they were to be worn on the right upper arm, midway between the point of the shoulder and the elbow. The disadvantage of this position was that NCO badges of rank were worn here and would therefore be partly covered. An amendment to the early order was issued moving the regulation position of the wings to two inches from the point of the shoulder and above any formation badge. In some cases it appears that the early wing position was retained, at least for a short time, by some of the recipients and contemporary photos show the wings being worn in both positions simultaneously.

A Pegasus in pale blue on maroon was the formation badge of members of the airborne formations: any man with even the slightest claim on




the badge would claim it. The badge, as the shoulder title, was made in printed and embroidered forms.

### BOOTS

A copy of the German side-lacing boot was developed along with other types of German equipment. They came with soft soles and were almost a perfect copy of the German boot. They proved very expensive to make and were very shortlived.

### GRAVITY KNIFE

Another copy of a German idea: it differed only in that it had a rough finish on the handle. Again it was shortlived and was replaced by the Fairbairn-Sykes (FS) fighting knife. 

### Acknowledgments

With grateful thanks to Steve Kiddle, Trevor Poole and the airborne formation of the BRA for their assistance with these photographs.

*The front and back of a first type smock with 37 pattern web shown being worn outside rather than inside. The sewn-in shape is very clearly shown: the smock was donned by stepping into the 'legs'. There were press studs (poppers) so that during a jump the 'legs' would be held tightly around the wearer's legs. The paratrooper was, from the outset, not expected to fight for very long and would jump with very light web equipment.*



# The king's Lifeguards, 1642-46 (1)

IN 1642, the approach of Civil War found both King and Parliament without a standing army to call on for support. This was a situation which the contestants speedily set out to rectify. But the King's party were faced with a more pressing problem.

It was clear that Parliament could effectively end the war at a stroke if they were able to capture the King himself, and that this was in fact an objective was made clear in the orders given by Parliament to their Captain General, the Earl of Essex, before he took the field in August 1642. He was instructed by 'Battel or otherwise, to rescue his Majesty's person, and the Persons of the Prince and the Duke of York, out of those desperate persons who are now about them'.<sup>1</sup>

The Royalists had begun to guard against this threat before hostilities actually began. In June, whilst the King was at York, recruiting for the Lifeguards began, and by 27 June there were reported to be 200 horse and 1,000 foot (the latter probably including some of the Yeomen of the Guard),

JOHN BARRETT Paintings by RICK COLLINS

IN THIS FIRST of two articles we examine King Charles I's Lifeguard of Foot, finding somewhat surprisingly that they were usually badly understrength, poorly equipped and not very successful on the battlefield.

## Flags of the Lifeguard of Foot

A good deal of information, albeit conflicting in some details, has survived concerning the flags carried by the Lifeguard of Foot. The sets illustrated in this article are based on descriptions of the colours captured at Naseby, together with details given by Richard Symonds in his 'Diary'.

A further detailed description is given in Thomason Tracts E. 288(45). "Six Standards of Foot Colours of the Foot Guard, all which have the every of them a red Crosse in a white silver field, next unto the Pole, and are severally distinguished thus, the Colours are all red.

"1. The King's Standard with a goulding Lyon, and over the Lyon a goulden Crown, and over the Lyon and under the crown this motto, DIEU ET MON DROIT.

"2. The Queen's Standard, with Dragon and Crown, both in gould.

"3. A Percullis and a crown, both in gould.

"4. A Rose and Crown, the crown gould, the Rose white silver in the middle, and the outward leaves shadowed with silver. (Shown 'as gold in Turmile.)

"5. Six colours of the Standards of the Foot Guard, were every of them three Roses apiece, in the same manner that the Single Rose us described. All of those six Colours of the Foot Guard, the Colours are Red, and have every of them a red Crosse in a white silver Field next the pole.'

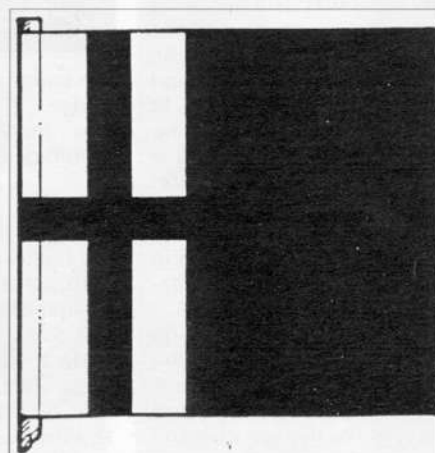
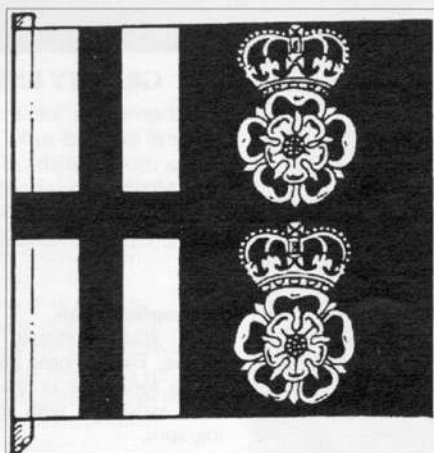
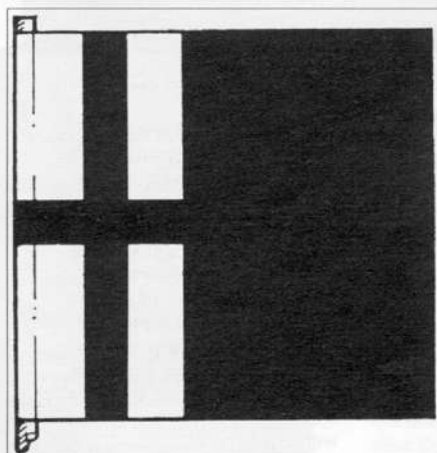
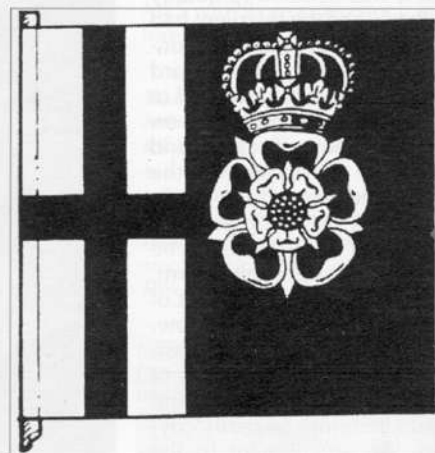
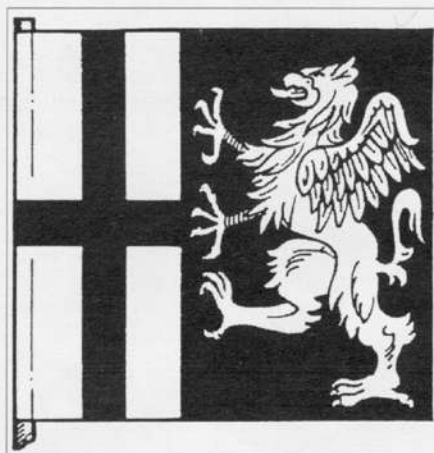
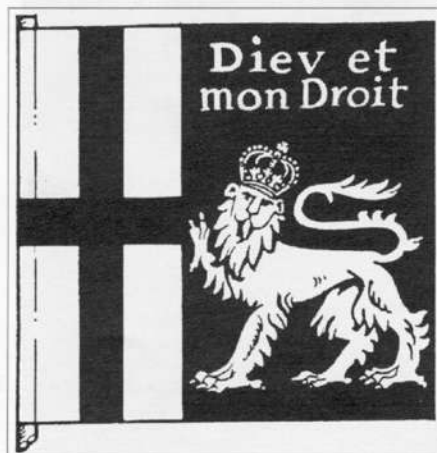
Of the other sets shown, Turmile's manuscript may have been drawn many years after the war, and may not be drawn from the original flags. Symonds certainly drew his at the time, but his work has often hasty, done from memory, and not always entirely accurate/

intended as a 'guard for his person'.

This force was initially organised into the Lifeguard of Foot, the Lifeguard of Horse and the Gentlemen Pensioners. It is proposed to examine the history of each of these units in turn.

## THE LIFEGUARD OF FOOT

The Lifeguard of Foot was probably commissioned whilst King Charles I was still at York in July 1642, and was recruited in the weeks preceding the Edgehill campaign. The regiment's Colonel throughout its history was Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, later Earl of Lindsay after his father died at Edgehill. The officers of the regiment seem to have included a fairly large number of professional soldiers. Lord Willoughby had served as a Captain in Holland; Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Vavasour had been a Colonel of Foot in the Second Bishop's War. Major William Leighton had served on the Continent, whilst a number both of the other officers and the rank-and-file had also served in either







*Pikeman of the Lifeguard of Foot. Unlike some other regiments, which became all-musketeer, the Lifeguard seems to have retained roughly the accepted proportion of musketeers to pikemen in a 2:1 ratio throughout its existence. There is no evidence that body armour was worn by any pikemen in the Oxford Army, and this example is dressed in similar fashion to the musketeers, and is endeavouring to cope with the climatic rigours of campaign life with the aid of a different style of montero and two pairs of stockings. His pike, in theory was between 14 and 16 feet in length, but had probably been cut down for convenience to about 12.*

Europe or Ireland.

The first recruits for the regiment seem to have been raised in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, many of them from Lord Willoughby's own estates. A number of Derbyshire lead miners were added by the great Royalist financier, Thomas Bushell. Other recruits came in later from Cheshire.

By the time that battle was joined at Edgehill (23 October) the regiment was probably 1,000 strong. Although the unit later wore red, this may not necessarily have been the case at the time of the battle, and its system of flags may also not yet have been complete.

### Edgehill

The Lifeguard was part of Sir Nicholas Byron's Tertia and, after being involved in a firefight and 'push of pike' with their Parliamentarian counterparts, was charged by Sir Phillip Stapleton's Regiment of Horse. A Parliamentarian account describes the action which followed. 'The enemy's body of foot, wherein the King's standard was, came on within musket shot of us; upon which we observing no horse to encounter withal, charged them with some loss from their pikes, tho very little from their shot; but not being able to break them, we retreated to our former station...'<sup>2</sup>

A new attack was launched by two regiments of foot, 'where the King's standard was, but could not break them till Sir William Balfour at the head of a party of horse charging them in the rear, and we marching to take them in the flank, they brake and ran away towards the hill'. Ludlow saw 'about three score lie within the compass of threescore yards upon the ground wherein that brigade fought in which the King's standard was'.<sup>3</sup>

It is highly unlikely that all of these casualties fell upon the Lifeguard. In November it was still one of the strongest regiments in the Royalist Army, with about 670 men. A number of

officers were among the unfortunate, however. Lord Willoughby was captured whilst trying to rescue his mortally wounded father, and Sir William Vavasour and Captain Henry Radley were also among the prisoners. Major William Leighton was wounded and, perhaps the ultimate misfortune, the regiment briefly lost possession of the Banner Royal. All in all, it had not been an auspicious start.

### Dress and equipment

The Lifeguard were certainly uniformed by July 1643, and very possibly much earlier, as Thomas Bushell was later thanked by the King for 'clothing our life Guard and three regiments more, with suites, stockings, shoes and mounteroes when we were readie to march into the field'.<sup>4</sup>

Further details are given in a letter of 11 October 1643 from the Earl of Bath to his wife: 'your servant Tom Bold is now in a company of the Life Guards in a red suit and montero which they wear'.<sup>5</sup> There is no evidence that the pikemen of the Lifeguard, in common with the other foot regiments of the Oxford Army, ever wore any armour, and the basic dress of pikemen and musketeers was probably the same.

The parlous state of equipment in the Royalist Army during the winter of 1642/43 is brought home by the condition of the Lifeguard, which might have been expected to have had priority, at this time. On 1 February Sir Jacob Astley, Sergeant-Major-General of the Oxford Army Foot, wrote to Sir John Heydon, Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance: 'Sir John Heydon may be pleased to take notice that the regiment of the King's guards being very weekly Armed; as the last time his Majestie saw this garrison in Armes, wher they appeared 190 armed and 210 unarmed wherefore I pray as many Armes shall be brought into the Magazine lett some espetiall care be taken first to furnish the King's guardes before any other regiments with the number of 110 Armes or some sufficient supply'.<sup>6</sup>

By February the regiment totalled 512 men, of whom 322 were unarmed. Including officers, this may have given a total strength of 600 men in ten companies. By 23 April the Lifeguard had been issued with 110 muskets and 212 pikes over a two-month period, suggesting that the proportion of pike to musket in the Lifeguard was probably higher than the

**Rick Scollins' reconstruction show (A) and (B) musketeers of the Lifeguard of Foot.** These two soldiers are typical of the rank and file of the Lifeguard during the period 1643-45. Both wear the red uniforms apparently first issued in the early summer of 1643. Their coats and monteros follow the common contemporary practice of having linings in a contrasting colour, although the colours depicted here are conjectural. The montero headgear, in various patterns, seems to have been regulation issue in the Foot regiments of the Oxford Army, though on campaign a variety of items would have been worn.

Figure (A) is equipped in a style common in the Oxford Army during the opening campaigns of 1643. Although the bandolier was the favoured method for carrying ammunition, severe initial shortages forced the Royalists to issue many of their musketeers with powder bags.

Figure (B), of the 1644-45 period, is more fortunate. He has a bandolier and montero which they wear'.<sup>5</sup> There is no evidence that the pikemen of the Lifeguard, in common with the other foot regiments of the Oxford Army, ever wore any armour, and the basic dress of pikemen and musketeers was probably the same.

**C) A drummer of the Lifeguard of Foot.** Despite what is sometimes stated, drummers of the Civil War period were invariably grown men. As well as their obvious role, they were also employed as messengers to the enemy, during which duties they were expected to discover as much information about the opposition as possible, often in their own inimitable way. Sir James Turner wrote, 'If they can carry a message wittily e enemy, they may be permitted to be drolls'. The dress of a drummer was at the discretion of his commanding officer, hence the somewhat dandified appearance of this character.

**(D) An officer of the Lifeguard of Foot.** Professional soldiers with experience in the European wars were eagerly sought after. This example is one such war-hardened veteran. He wears buff-coat and gorget, and one of the variety of styles of headpiece in use. As an officer, he wears his own choice of more ornate clothing, and his allegiance to the King is denoted by his crimson identifying sash.

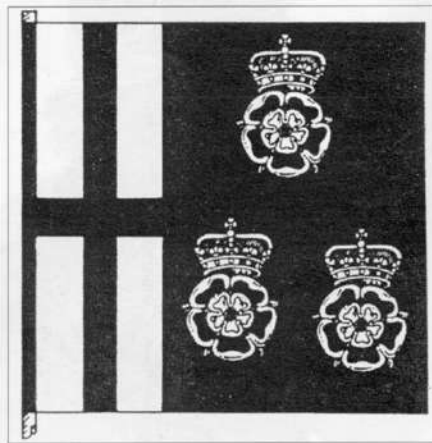
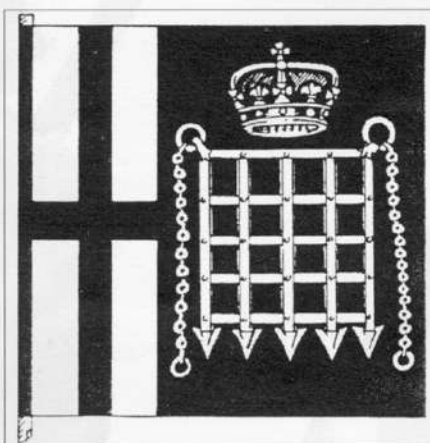
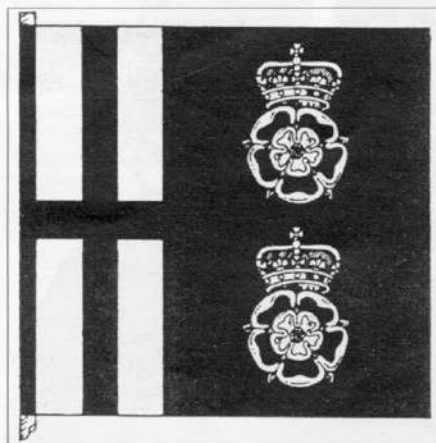
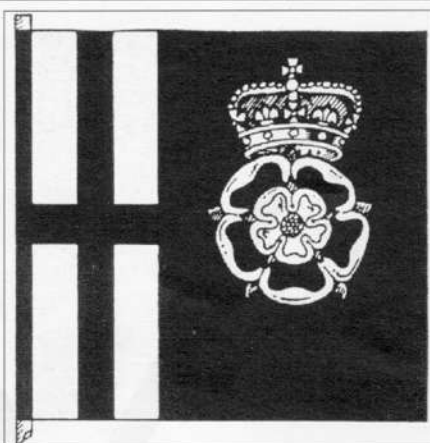
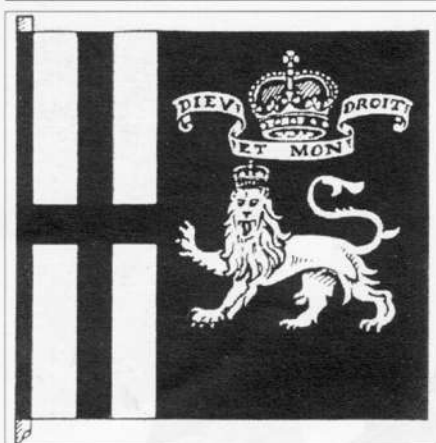












ideal.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the regiment, under Major William Leighton, may have been with Prince Maurice in the action at Ripple Field on 13 April, and it certainly took part in the unsuccessful attempt to relieve Reading which was

frustrated at Caversham Bridge on 25 April. On the 23rd, some of the Lifeguard had been surprised in their quarters at Dorchester, and a Captain-Lieutenant, a Lieutenant and 40 men taken prisoner.

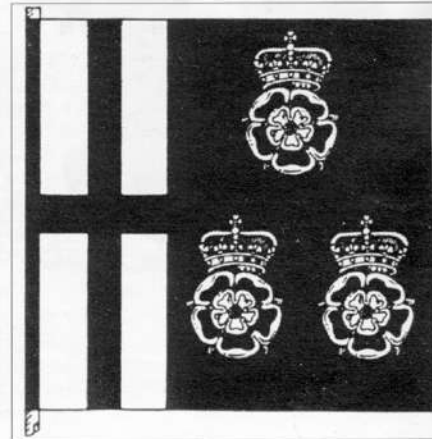
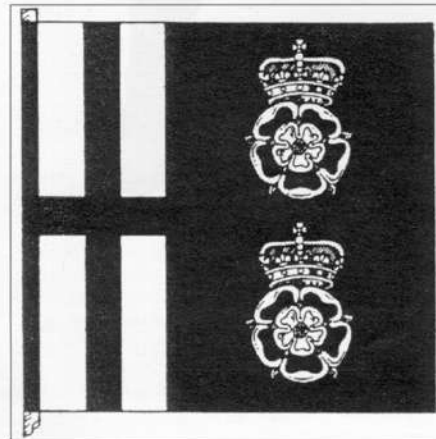
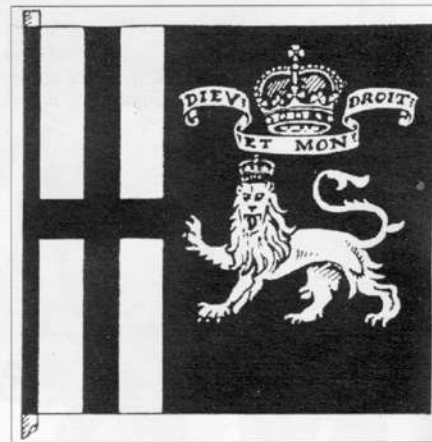
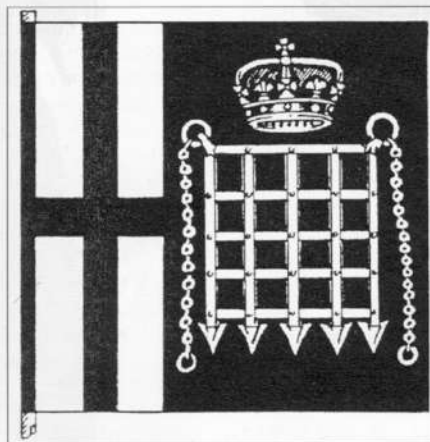
About the middle of June,

William Leighton was commissioned as Lieutenant-Colonel, in place of Sir William Vavasour who had taken over command of the Royalist forces in Gloucestershire.

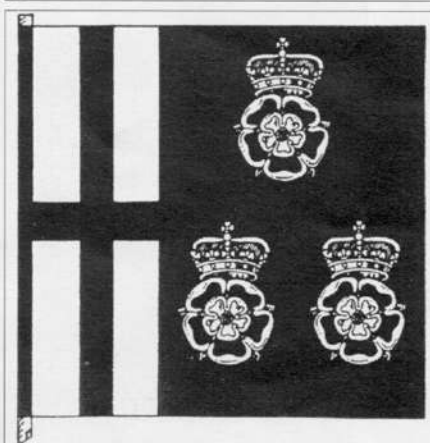
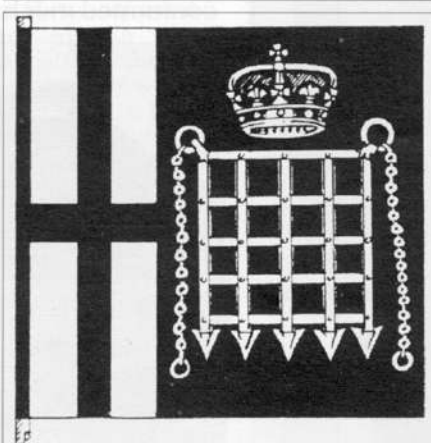
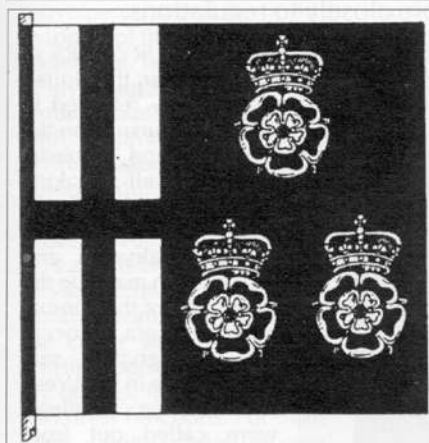
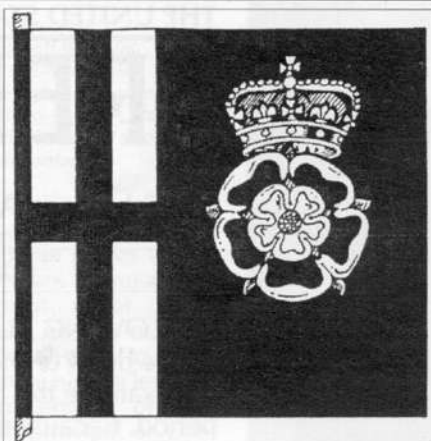
Robert Markham became Major.

The Lifeguard was present at

the Siege of Gloucester in August, and at I Newbury (20 September). As, unlike the Lifeguard of Horse, the personal protection of the Monarch was not a primary part of the Lifeguard's duties, it was available for direct use in the battle. It







formed part of Sir Nicholas Byron's Tertio, and was involved in the fierce fighting for the enclosures around Round Hill. There is nothing to suggest that the Lifeguard did anything to particularly distinguish itself on this occasion, of which Sir John Byron claimed 'our Foot played the poltroons extremely that day'. The regiment is known to have suffered losses of 29 common soldiers seriously wounded, not as heavy a casualty list as in a number of other units. Several junior officers may have been among the fatalities.

There is some suggestion that by this stage in its history, the Lifeguard's company commanders may have tended to be professional soldiers, whilst their juniors were more likely to have been drawn from among the gentry.

On 6 April 1644, 350 of the Lifeguard were among the troops sent from Oxford to reinforce Hopton after his defeat at Cheriton, and efforts were afoot to re-equip the unit for the coming campaign season. On 30 April, the Lifeguard was issued with 132 muskets and 68 long pikes, together with bandoliers. It is interesting that in this warrant the Earl of Lyndsey, the Lifeguard's Colonel, is described as 'Lieutenant Generall of our Guards'.<sup>8</sup>

It may be assumed that the Regiment was present at

Cropredy Bridge (28 June) though no details are known of its part in the battle.

A return of sick soldiers during the Lostwithiel campaign suggests that the Lifeguard may have had as many as 11 companies. One of these was probably Captain Legge's company of firelocks which was normally employed to guard the baggage train. The regiment must also have been at Il Newbury.

Like most of the foot regiments of the Oxford Army, despite probably being given priority in replacements, the strength of the Lifeguard had dwindled considerably by the beginning of the spring campaign of 1645. According to Symonds, it may have totalled only 200 men when the King set out in May on the Naseby campaign.

The lifeguard formed part of the reserve at Naseby, and so may have been only lightly engaged in the main battle. However, they were caught up in the general destruction of the King's foot, and captured almost to a man. A list and a number of illustrations of ten captured colours survive.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leighton and Major Markham, presumably because they were mounted, succeeded in making their escape from the battlefield, and were probably involved in the efforts which were made next month in Herefordshire to re-

form the Lifeguard. Some 500 recruits were to be provided by the gentry of the county, and Leighton remained at Hereford until December, presumably continuing efforts to raise men, though with no result of consequence.

Another nucleus for the proposed new Lifeguard of Foot was formed in August from a small number of foot from the recently surrendered garrison of Carlisle, who made their way south to join the King, but were quickly turned into dragoons. They may have formed the last remnant of the Lifeguard of Foot at the time of the surrender of Oxford in June 1646.

#### Officers of the Lifeguard of Foot

Colonel Lord Willoughby d'Eresby (Earl of Lyndsey), Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Vavasour (until circa June 1643) and Sir William Leighton (from June 1643, previously Major), Major Robert Markham (from June 1643).

Captains John Beeton (PW Naseby), Nicholas Bertie (PW Naseby), Thomas Cholmondeley, Ferdinando Fisher (PW Naseby), Charles Fox (PW Naseby), Johnson, Richard Legge (Firelocks), Thomas Leigh, Robert Levinz, Thomas Mynne, William Partridge, Sir Henry Radley, Stacy, Richard Walthall and Walters.

Captain-Lieutenants Stephen

Forster and Waller (PW Naseby).

Lieutenants Anthony Aubrey (killed 1643), Brown (PW Naseby), Cotton, Cranfield, Richard Edmonds, William Fordred, Godwin, Robert Havercamp, William Hull, Hugh(?) Leigh, Mewsey (PW Naseby), Thomas Mucklow, William St John and Webster.

Ensigns John Ball, William Berkenhead (PW Naseby), Robert Chamberlane (PW Naseby), Robert Hubberstay (Johnson's Coy), Ingolsby (PW Naseby), Masterman, Peter Mowshall (Levinz's Coy) (PW Naseby), Porter (PW Naseby), wildhall (PW Naseby) and Wright (PW Naseby).

Quartermaster Benjamin Stone.<sup>9</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Quoted by Peter Young in *Edgehill 1642* (1967), p60.
2. Edmund Ludlow's account, *op cit* p311.
3. Ludlow, *op cit*.
4. Sir Henry Ellis, 'Original Letters', 2nd series, Vol 3, p309.
5. Quoted in Margaret Toynbee and Peter Young, *Strangers in Oxford* (1973), p44.
6. Ian Roy (ed), *Royalist Ordnance Papers, 1642-46, Part I* (1964), p195.
7. Toynbee and Young, *op cit*, p38.
8. Roy, *op cit*, Part II, p346.
9. Stuart Reid (ed), *Officers and Regiments of the Royalist Army*, Vol III (Partizan Press, 1989), pp105-6.



# 'REDLEGS'

## US Heavy Artillery Uniforms, 1866-76

JOHN P. LANGELLIER

FOLLOWING AUGUST'S article on enlisted infantrymen's dress of the post-Civil War period, this month we examine the heavy artillery uniforms of the same period. Because their duties were largely static, these conformed much more closely to regulations.

AFTER FOUR YEARS of the Civil War, the United States Army returned to its earlier pursuits on the frontier and coastal areas, as well as taking up 'Reconstruction Duty' in the South. While cavalrymen and infantrymen made up the major part of the combat arms of the era, on occasion, artillerymen saw field service in the West. For instance, 'Redlegs' were called out from their garrisons in 1872 to help dislodge the Modocs who made a valiant but futile stand in the Lava Beds of northern California. 'Wagon guns' went along in pursuit of the Nez Perce as they made their unsuccessful bid for freedom during an impressive flight toward Canada. Indeed, some of the artillery pieces became prizes of the Nez Perce who, fortunately for the troops, did not know how to employ the field pieces. In some other instances, such as the Apache campaign of

1881, artillery personnel performed as *ersatz* infantry. Additionally, these gunners manned fortresses on both the East Coast and in California, or operated as light batteries of mounted artillery.

A synopsis of their regulation wear from 1866 through 1876 provides a better appreciation of these men during the first decade after Appomattox. In fact, the story of their uniform during this period closely parallels the history of the uniform for the entire army of that time because, for the most part, the well dressed enlisted foot or heavy artillerymen of the immediate post-Civil War era differed little from his predecessor of 1861 through 1865.

**Top left:** The heavy artillery dress coat adopted in 1872 exhibited 4in long swatches of scarlet facing on the collar as a background for the brass regimental numeral. This version has sergeant major chevrons on the sleeves. (Smithsonian Institution.)

**Bottom left:** The 1872-pattern musician's dress coat with herringbone chest trim. This particular example includes the chevrons of the principal musician — three bars and a bugle device in scarlet facing material. (Smithsonian Institution.)

**Centre:** The 1858-pattern heavy artillery frock coat with silk chevrons of a regimental quartermaster sergeant. (Smithsonian Institution.)





To begin with, a black felt hat with ostrich feather and scarlet worsted hat cord topped the uniform for formal duties. The hat's other adornment consisted of a sheet brass crossed cannon device (the artillery insignia), national eagle coat of arms side piece, and unit designations for company and regiment. The hat was to be looped up on the left side but, by 1872, authorities granted permission to turn it up on the right side to accommodate the 'carry arms' and 'right shoulder shift-arm' movements called for in drill manuals of the period.<sup>1</sup> As this pattern of headgear did not enjoy great popularity, individuals sometimes replaced it with a privately purchased civilian slouch hat which could double for garrison fatigues and campaign purposes as well.<sup>2</sup>

A single-breasted nine-button dark blue wool frock coat, trimmed with scarlet piping on the collar and cuffs, served enlisted personnel for a variety of uses, including parades and dress functions. For musicians,  $\frac{3}{8}$ in scarlet worsted lace was placed on the chest in a line with each button some  $6\frac{1}{2}$ in in length at the bottom, then gradually broadening as the lace went up the coat's front until the design contracted again so that the last row at the collar level measured the same length as that of the waist. A strip of matching lace followed the bars at the outer extremities thereby creating what was called a 'herringbone' form.

White berlin gloves might cover the hands. Brass shoulder scales of three distinct patterns to distinguish the privates, company musicians, and corporals; sergeants; and non-commissioned staff formed another part of the regulation for formal occasions, as did the unpopular leather neck stock, the latter item being discontinued by 1872.<sup>3</sup>

For fatigue duties and campaign, a dark blue wool sack coat fit the bill with its four eagle buttons on the chest. The same chevrons appeared on the sleeves of the sack as were prescribed for the frock coat. These were worn points down on each sleeve just above the elbow to indicate rank, beginning with two stripes for a corporal, three for a sergeant, and three stripes surmounted by a lozenge for a first sergeant. They were all of worsted scarlet lace sewn on to a blue wool background to match the coat. Chevrons for

*The model depicts a heavy artillery sergeant with the 1833 short sword and its appropriate belt. The entire uniform, edged weapon, and belt were discontinued after 1872. (Smithsonian Institution.)*

the regimental quartermaster-sergeant (three stripes with a tie of three bars above) and for the sergeant major (three stripes with an arc of three stripes above) were to be of silk. The three highest levels of non-commissioned officers, along with principal or chief musicians, likewise donned a scarlet worsted sash which wrapped about the waist twice then tied at the left hip with the worsted bullion fringe tassels hanging down at the side.

Additionally, regulations authorised service chevrons for the frock coat to indicate the number of five-year enlistments completed by the wearer. The  $\frac{1}{2}$ in wide diagonal half chevrons were sewn on just above the point of the cuff and additional ones would be placed parallel to the first mark and atop it for each subsequent period of 'faithful service'. The colour of these worsted lace insignia corresponded to the branch in which the soldier served when he ended his tour of duty. Eighth-inch light blue or blue stripes on each side of the chevron denoted service in war for artillerymen.

A forage cap, which often bore no insignia although regulations mentioned that the company letter would be displayed on the front, or a non-regulation privately purchased slouch hat, made up another part of field and garrison outfit as did the single-breasted sky-blue wool overcoat with short unlined cape. To repel rain, the government provided the dubious benefits of a gum blanket or poncho.

Sky-blue wool kersey 'trousers' were 'made loose, without plaits', and were 'to spread well over' the footwear (usually Jefferson booties or brogans of black leather). The outer 'trouser' seams were

*A pioneer of the heavy or siege artillery displays the scarlet crossed hatchets of his specialty. The model also exhibits service stripes below the elbow to indicate completion of five years' faithful service. The hat is pinned up on the right side as was allowed by 1872. Prior to that year, the hat was to be pinned up on the left side for foot troops. (Smithsonian Institution.)*





plain for privates but exhibited  $\frac{1}{2}$ in stripes down each leg for corporals and stripes of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in for sergeants, these being of scarlet worsted in both cases.<sup>4</sup>

The same individuals prescribed sashes as part of their outfit also exhibited one more badge of authority, the 1833 pattern artillery non-commissioned officer's sword. This was carried on a special belt with rectangular brass plate bearing an eagle and a separately applied German silver wreath. Privates and corporals substituted a wide leather belt with oval brass US 1839-pattern plate. A cap pouch and a cartridge box, worn on a cross-belt, and a bayonet in its leather scabbard formed the remaining accoutrements.

Since heavy artillerymen could double as infantry, their rifled muskets, in due course, would be replaced by the Springfield Allin conversion. In short order the newly manufactured .45-70-calibre 'trap-door' (sometimes known as the 'Long Tom') would become the main longarm when the gunners were not serving their cannon.

Along with improved rifles came a new assortment of accoutrements. At first, old style .58-calibre cartridge boxes underwent modification with the former tin liners for paper cartridges giving way to cardboard boxes of metallic shells, or sheepskin inserts, or to a pair of wooden blocks, one atop the other, each bored to hold 20 rounds. Some military men, including Anson Mills, saw the wisdom of replacing these cumbersome boxes with cartridge belts similar to those in vogue for civilians of the era although this type of innovation did not much matter to the artillerymen in their usual garrison duties.<sup>5</sup> Instead, McKeever and Hagner cartridge boxes remained the norm.<sup>6</sup> Both the McKeever and the Hagner were worn on various belts that came into being during the early 1870s. Finally, a rectangular brass US belt plate likewise began to make its appearance in the



In this 'family' portrait, the younger soldier on the left belongs to the regimental band as indicated by the special non-regulation braid on the chest of his coat. The Fifth Artillery private on the right wears the regulation coat (note the two service stripes on each sleeve) issued to all enlisted personnel of the heavy artillery, except bandsmen and musicians. Both men have the 1872 dress cap with scarlet mohair trim and scarlet pompon. (Robert Borrell, Sr, Collection.)

early 1870s, gaining wider favour as the Victorian era progressed.

By 1872, drastically revised uniform regulations appeared too. To begin with, a stiff cap covered in dark blue wool and trimmed in scarlet mohair lace replaced the heavy artillerymen's old hat. In the top of the crown, a japanned circular ventilator supposedly made the piece more comfortable in heat. A 3in high, scarlet pear-shaped or conical wool pompon surmounted the cap while a diminutive eagle device

went below this as did a small sheet brass pair of crossed cannon. Photographic evidence indicates the company letter and regimental numerals likewise affixed to the front in certain instances although this practice did not become official until 1877.<sup>7</sup> Brass side buttons and a black leather chinstrap with brass slide completed the cap.

The same type of chinstrap and general service side buttons appeared on the new lower crowned 'chasseur pattern' forage cap adopted in

1872. The unbound patent-leather visor was the type found on the dress cap too. At first, only the company letter was required on the new headgear but, by 1873, the crossed cannon device from the dress cap, regimental numeral, and company letter would be added.<sup>8</sup>

Neither of these types of headwear provided much protection from the elements. The new uniform regulations of 1872 attempted to rectify this situation by providing a black fatigue or campaign hat of mixed coney and muskrat. This item could be folded closed by means of hooks and eyes or worn with the brim open to shade from solar rays or precipitation. In theory this represented a positive step, but in practice, the hat tended to lose its shape and disintegrate from exposure to weather and sun. Once more, some men took it upon themselves to procure civilian slouch hats, a practice which remained somewhat common even after the quartermaster department produced an improved wool campaign hat which featured a stiffer brim and 'Brasher' ventilators. In both the case of the 1872 and the 1876 hat, surplus 1858 scarlet worsted hat cords could be worn, soldiers obtaining these at a cost of \$.07 each, in those fairly rare instances when someone bought these unnecessary accessories.<sup>9</sup>

Another edition to the uniform regulations which appeared in 1872 was the pleated blouse which had been worn by some high-ranking officers on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line during the Civil War. The pattern for enlisted artillery personnel was dark blue wool with scarlet wool twisted worsted piping around the roll collar, cuffs, and across the yoke. Nine buttons of the type issued with the old frock coat adorned the chest. One small button accented the piping on each cuff.

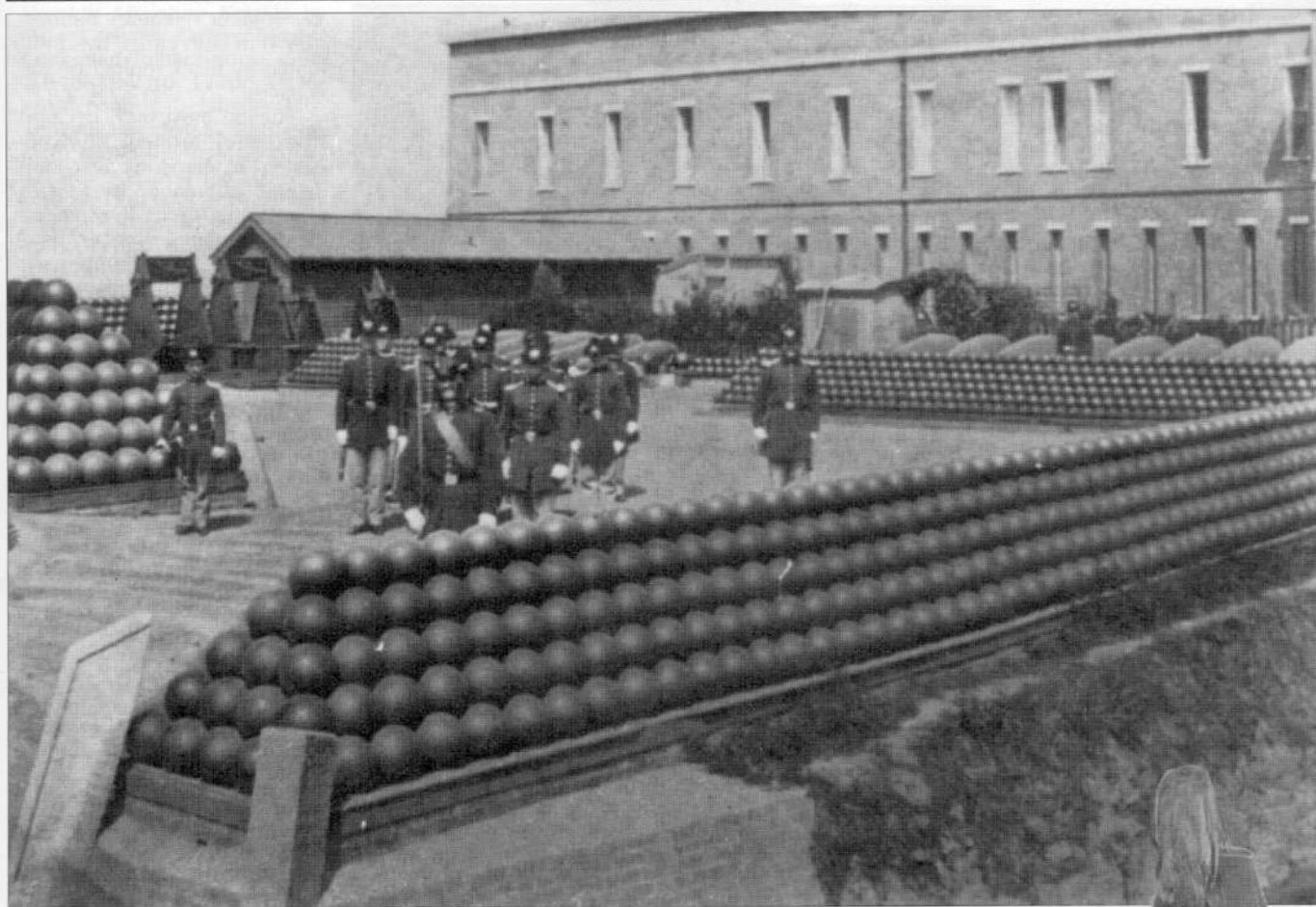
Difficulty in maintaining these blouses in a neat, military manner caused considerable negative comment from the soldiery. For this reason, a streamlined five-button version, with no plaits and without the cord on the yoke, was adopted in 1874. This item remained in service until 1883.

One more major item added to the issue adopted in 1872 was the basque coat for dress wear. This garment resembled



First Lieutenant Samuel Canby of the Fourth Artillery turns out in finery typical of company grade artillery officers from 1858 through 1861. The uniform was identical from 1861 through 1872 except that the trousers were sky-blue rather than dark blue as seen here. Note the embroidered side piece and binding on his hat's brim. (Glen Swanson Collection.)





*An officer of the day with his sash draped over the shoulder scarf style stands in the position of authority during guard mount at Alcatraz Island in this 1866-1872 photograph. (Bancroft Library.)*

the old frock coat. The new pattern exhibited flashing of scarlet facing cloth on the cuffs, while matching material appeared on tails and the front of each side of the collar which extended 4in back. Brass regimental numerals were placed on this field of collar facing. Piping down the front seam and around a pair of belt loops (one on each side, almost directly above the hips) which helped to hold up the black leather belt and its brass buckle added to the effect. A new style of herringbone emanating from the buttons on the coat's chest also was prescribed for musicians and bandmen. In the latter instance, regulations allowed a great deal of latitude about not only the ornamentation of the coat but also the accessories for band uniforms.

Some problem with the cut of the coat and the placement of the belt loops required a modified pattern to be made after 1876, although to all intents and purposes the outline and basic look of the

piece remained the same until replaced in 1884 by a dress coat which employed a collar completely faced in scarlet as well as new design on the tail and the elimination of the belt loops.

All the various 1872 pattern coats required chevrons. These would be of the same scarlet facing material used for the dress coat but the stripes would be made with black silk chain-stitching to separate each bar. Some individuals continued to obtain custom-made chevrons which had separately sewn stripes of scarlet wool material placed on dark blue wool backing or directly to the sleeve of the coat. This impractice tended to disappear later in the 1870s when issue chevrons came into exclusive use. Once again, these went above each elbow on all the jackets and coats, with points down. The only exception was on the overcoat. Since capes obscured the wearer's rank, chevrons were to be placed on the cuffs.

The overcoat itself was to be the same as issued during the late war until 1872. In that year, the double-breasted pattern authorised for mounted troops was to become universal. Because insufficient quantities of the double-breasted

coats were on hand in 1872, military authorities revised this order and called for a longer second cape to be added to the single-breasted foot pattern overcoat for heavy artillerymen.<sup>10</sup>

To combat the effects of opposite climatic conditions which required the overcoat, the military explored summer clothing for those areas which experienced high temperatures. In 1878, artillerymen at Fort Monroe, Virginia, received an experimental cork summer helmet covered in white drill.<sup>11</sup> Within two years, this item would be approved for army-wide use where the climate dictated issue. Shortly thereafter, the dark blue spiked helmet for heavy artillerymen followed, being adopted in 1881 in lieu of the cap with pompon for dress wear.

*Second Lieutenant Daniel Morgan Taylor of the First Artillery typifies the 1872 through 1880 dress for company grade officers of the heavy artillery. Field grade officers differed little from this look except for the fact that their belts were of solid lace and their coats featured three gold lace ornaments on each sleeve rather than the two for lieutenants and captains. (Glen Swanson Collection.)*





Brevet Major John Fulton Reynolds, as commandant of cadets at West Point, depicts the 1858 through 1872 regulation garb for formal wear by field grade officers of the heavy artillery, including the double-breasted coat, epaulettes and hat with two feathers. The numeral in the centre of his insignia is silver and indicates Reynolds' assignment to the Third Artillery. (Aztec Club Collection, US Army Military History Institute.)



Officers' uniforms underwent similar development to that of enlisted personnel during the decade between 1866 to 1876. At the outset, the 1858 black hat was in use but unlike those provided to the rank and file, the edges were bound and the body of a better material. Hat cords worn by officers differed too in that they were of interwoven black and gold silk threads which terminated in a acorns. The crossed cannon and eagle devices were of gold embroidery while three black ostrich feathers adorned the hats of majors through colonels and two were to be employed by lieutenants through captains.

The coat for company grade officers was single breasted and had nine large gilt buttons which bore an 'A' on the shield of the eagle motif. Epaulettes for formal functions and shoulder straps for fatigues, marches, campaign, and garrison use provided indication of rank. Field grade officers wore the same basic type of straps and epaulettes but these topped the shoulders of double-breasted frock coats which had seven buttons in each row. The forage cap or a slouch hat could be worn with the coat too. Additionally, an officer's four-button sack could be substituted depending on the duties being performed. Sky-blue trousers with  $\frac{1}{8}$ in scarlet welt, a black leather sword belt, and a crimson silk net sash which went around the waist in the same manner as enlisted men, except when the individual served as the officer of the day, were the other major regulation components for the 'brass' until 1872.

In that year, a cap which resembled the enlisted pattern was adopted. The trim was of gold lace and the insignia of gold embroidery. Moreover, scarlet cock feathers attached by means of a tulip shaped holder distinguished officers from their men.

The 1872 changes likewise

included a double-breasted coat for all officers, with company grade officers having seven buttons in each row and field grade officers nine per row. In the former instance, two gold lace ornaments were sewn on each cuff and topped by small gilt artillery officer's buttons while in the latter case three gold lace designs adorned the cuffs. Moreover, knots with scarlet backgrounds, embroidered insignia of rank, and silver embroidered regimental numeral were ushered in at this time. Further, the sash disappeared, as it had for non-commissioned officers, being replaced by a gold lace belt with three scarlet stripes for second lieutenants, first lieutenants and captains, and of a solid gold lace for majors, lieutenant-colonels and colonels. Sky-blue 'trousers' with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in scarlet stripe of facing material down the outer seams came into being in 1872. Black square-toed shoes and white berlin gloves were the other finery called for on dress parade, inspections, balls, and like formal occasions. Off duty, the officer could replace his knots with shoulder straps

and the dress cap with a forage cap.

The forage cap likewise could be worn with the new five-button officer's jacket. This jacket was trimmed in black mohair around the collar, edges and rear as well as black mohair galloons on the sleeves and herringbones on the chest. Once again, shoulder straps indicated rank. In 1875, the mohair was deleted from the jacket, although some individuals continued to have it applied to the collar and as edging down the front and around the skirt.<sup>12</sup>

The two campaign hats issued to enlisted men were authorised for officers, as was the summer helmet, but covered in fine white wool material rather than drill. In addition, the slender Model 1860 staff and field sword was worn after 1872 and a black leather sword belt required for those instances when the gold lace belt was not in service. For overcoats, the beautiful dark blue wool officer's cloak coat with black frogs on the chest that had been regulation from 1851 through 1872 was to give way to a dark blue double-breasted coat ornamented

by officer's eagle buttons. Rank, in both cases, was indicated by black mohair on the sleeves.

For the most part, because the heavy artillery normally served in garrisons near centres of population and transportation systems, they tended to wear the prescribed uniform unlike their counterparts in the infantry and cavalry who were often posted to remote duty in the West. For his reason, the redlegs were more likely to be models of regulation wear than their comrades on the frontier. **MI**

#### Notes

1. Captain J. Schindel, Company H, 5th Infantry to Adjutant General, 7 March 1872, and 3rd Endorsement from R.B. Marcy, President, Regulation Revision Board, Record Group 94, Adjutant General Correspondence Files, National Archives Microcopy M666, Reel No 53.
2. Edgar M. Howell, *United States Army Headgear 1855-1902* (Washington DC: National Museum of History and Technology, 1975), pp5-12.
3. General Order 91, War Department, Washington, DC, 1872. William Emerson, 'Leather Stocks in the US Army', *XXIX Military Collector and Historian* No 2 (Summer 1977): pp62-63.
4. Unless otherwise indicated information related to the outfit for the 1860s period was taken from *Uniform Regulations for the Army of the United States 1861* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1961).
5. The reader should review Douglas C. McChristian, 'The Model 1876 Cartridge Belt', *XXXIV Military Collector and Historian* No 3 (Fall 1982): pp109-116.
6. J. Edward Green, 'Notes on the 1874 McKeever', *XXIX Military Collector and Historian* No 1 (Spring 1977): pp40-41; p43 offers an informative piece into the evolution of this accoutrement proposed by First Lieutenant Samuel McKeever based upon his 10 January 1873 patent.
7. General Order No 8, War Department, Washington, DC, 8 February 1877.
8. General Order No 73, War Department, Washington, DC, 10 July 1873.
9. For more about the headwear patterns available from 1872 through 1877 consult, Howell, *United States Army Headgear*, pp28-59 and 76 through 78.
10. Donald E. Kloster, 'Uniforms of the Army Prior and Subsequent to 1872', Part 1, *XIV Military Collector and Historian* No 4 (Winter 1962): p104.
11. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1878 Vol I* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1878), p323.
12. General Order No 96, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, DC, 19 November 1875.



**Heraldic Miniature Knights** by Peter Greenhill. Guild of Master Craftsman Publications; ISBN 0-946819-27-0; 176pp, colour throughout; bibliography, appendix & index; £29.95.

Quite one of the most beautifully designed and produced books we have seen in a long time, and very reasonably priced considering both its quality and what cannot have been a very large print run, this is a guide both to heraldry and to collecting miniature knights (including men-at-arms, archers and personality figures). The author is a past chairman of the British Toymakers Guild and has for nearly 20 years been making and painting his own mediaeval figures in the tradition of 'Richard' Courtenay. The book is a celebration of the art of the master craftsman, illustrated in full colour on almost every page, showing miniature knights of all descriptions and nationalities in dozens of different poses. The authoritative text relates the history of such models, describes how they are manufactured and painted, and includes sections not just on Courtenay and Greenhill models but those of other famous designers such as Edward Suren. It describes heraldic terms and illustrates how they are represented, as well as including invaluable advice for collectors on fakes and how to recognise them, and on packaging (figures in their original boxes obviously being more valuable than when sold loose). What really comes through is Mr Greenhill's enormous enthusiasm and devotion to his subject, qualities which are reflected in the fine quality of the book's production. Even if the mediaeval period is not your normal 'thing', you will love having this book on your shelf.

**The Black Corps: A Collector's Guide to the History and Regalia of the SS** by Robin Lumsden. Ian Allan; ISBN 0-7110-2031-0; 160pp; mono illu. throughout; bibliography; £9.95.

Robin Lumsden has tackled a difficult subject with nerve as well as verve in this excellent book which has only been let down by its publisher producing it in smaller format than it deserves, which means the text almost needs a magnifying glass to make it legible. Do not let this put you off — it is not a book meant to be read from cover to cover but to be used for reference, and in this it does its job excellently. The emphasis is on the Allgemeine-SS with short chapters which almost appear as afterthoughts on the 'Germanic' and Waffen-SS, but within the author's brief is remarkably comprehensive. Individual sections, for example, cover not just uniforms and insignia, organisation, etc., but such subjects as conditions of service, the relationship between the SS and the police, racial concepts, SS mythology, education and SS economic enterprises. Within this there are sub-sections on, for example, Courts of Honour and the Dienstalterliste to name but

two. Every page is packed with concise information and the line and tone illustrations have been well selected to complement and add to the text. A very useful reference book for anyone interested in the Third Reich, with a detailed bibliography for further reading.

**'By the Orders of the Great White Queen': Campaigning in Zululand through the Eyes of the British Soldier, 1879** ed Ian Knight. Greenhill Books; ISBN 1-85367-122-3; 272pp; 16pp mono plates plus maps; bibliography & index; £18.95.

This latest in Greenhill Books' studies of Victorian campaigns is a masterful anthology of Zulu war reminiscences ranging from those of Evelyn Wood and Horace Smith-Dorrien to lesser figures who nevertheless had fascinating stories to tell. Eye-witness accounts of battles such as Isandlwana and Ulundi vividly recreate the heyday of Empire, but the book also reveals the drudgery and monotony of day-to-day camp life — interspersed with typical soldier's humour — and puts the modern reader vividly 'on the spot'. Readers should note that these books in Greenhill's African Colonial Wars series are only printed in relatively small quantities, which will enhance their collector's value in years to come.

**Storm Command: A personal account of the Gulf War by General Sir Peter de la Billière.** HarperCollins; ISBN 0-00-255138-1; 348pp; mono plates; index; £18.00

Breaking off a meeting on counter-terrorist tactics with a Chief Constable of police, he ordered a Lynx helicopter to fly him to London for lunch with Tom King at the Ministry of Defence. This was it! For Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billière, the summons he had been hoping to receive had finally arrived. With Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's blessing, he was (almost) on his way to Saudi Arabia.

The exultation of the moment — for despite all his qualifications, his appointment as tri-service commander in the Gulf had been by no means a foregone conclusion — lasted him through his sandwiches and glass of beer. After more than three decades of soldiering, much of his time spent with the SAS and in the Middle East (see *MI/53*), Sir Peter clinched the deal of his career — within a fortnight of having received official notification of his date of retirement.

General Sir Peter has a deft way with words and his narrative on the Gulf conflict rattles along with warmth and humour on every page — tempered by a professional soldier's only half-concealed cynicism towards cost and status conscious politicians and civil servants. One of the great appeals of this book (which

is so well written you will find it very hard to put down) is Sir Peter's slightly mocking self-deprecation. If he cocks something up, he doesn't stand on dignity and pretend it didn't happen, and he doesn't hold others responsible for his own mistakes. This makes a refreshing change from some of the memoirs which emerged in the wake of the Falklands conflict.

For a man approaching 60, Sir Peter keeps up a rigorous physical exercise programme which would be beyond many people half his age, but he believes (like the ancient Greeks) that this is essential to proper mental alertness. And he expected the same dedication from the troops under his command, a force which expanded from some 14 to 45,000 during the period October 1990 to February 1991. Not only expected it, but received it from the men (and women) enduring camp life and the threat of chemical or biological warfare during one of the worst winters that Saudi Arabia has experienced for years.

Sir Peter is unstinting in his praise for the people under his command, and took early steps to meet as many as possible as well as pressuring the government into providing finances for a theatre newspaper and radio station, which proved great morale-boosters.

Central to this 'settling-in' period was establishing cordial relations with the Saudi C-in-C, Prince Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdulaiza (which was helped by his knowledge of colloquial Arabic); and with the 17-stone American giant, General Norman Schwarzkopf. Potentially tricky though the early discussions were, Sir Peter managed to get on good if not immediately intimate terms in short order — creating a rapport which proved crucial in ending the campaign with Coalition victory at minimal loss of allied lives.

Sir Peter's very fine book not only gives a detailed insider's view of the problems — logistic and otherwise — of what the British called Operation 'Granby' (to the bemusement of Americans who had never heard of the Marquess), but some fascinating glimpses into things which retired generals rarely mention, such as security procedures and secure communications. He also talks a great deal about the SAS, which is the point about the book which the media have concentrated on, and there are some excellent photos of 'Pink Panthers' with Milan rocket launchers used Scud-hunting behind Iraqi lines.

This is an important book, not just for military enthusiasts and historians but for just about anyone. Among others, it should be compulsory reading for senior management in industry, because it will teach many of them — if they let the lessons sink home — how to get better results from their workforces!

**BQ**

**Sons of John Company: The India & Pakistan Armies 1903-1991** by John Gaylor with a Foreword by Field Marshal Sir John Chapple. Spellmount; ISBN 0-946771-98-7; 378pp; 16pp plates plus line illu. of badges; appendices & index. £28.00.

Nowhere in the world is the inheritance of British Imperial rule more clearly seen than in the armies of India and Pakistan, whose regiments still proudly bear the titles and continue the traditions born in 1903 when Lord Kitchener completed the unification of the Indian Army. In this excellent book, the Secretary of the Military Historical Society briefly traces the story of the Honourable East India Company ('John Company') and the gradual evolution of a national force led by British officers until Partition and Independence in 1947. Most books on the subject of the Indian Army stop there, but Mr Gaylor goes on to give the subsequent histories of the Indian and Pakistani Armies in war and uneasy peace up to the present day.

The chronological narrative actually comprises the minor part of the book, the bulk of it being devoted to a regiment by regiment description, including their badges, battle honours and changes of title. Instead of a lengthy bibliography at the end of the book, each entry has its own regimental bibliography, which is a very useful feature, while appendices give brief details of uniforms, insignia and rank structure.

The amount of detail which has been packed into this book, which is both readable and a remarkable reference, is amazing.

**MAA 250: Argentine Forces in the Falklands** by Nicholas Van Der Bijl, plates by Paul Hannon; ISBN 1-85532-227-7.

The tenth anniversary of the Falklands War has brought the predictable ripple of retrospective material; it is imaginative of Osprey to devote their 250th MAA title to the enemy — perhaps too easily dismissed at the time, if for understandable reasons. The author has clearly enjoyed excellent sources in Argentina, and the text is full of specific detail — broadly, exactly what happened, when and where, to every unit. These accounts are supported by useful tabular information. The photos vary in quality but include some of great interest. Mr Hannon's plates are specific, clear and authoritative (though this reviewer would guess that the printer has let him down somewhat, introducing an over-strong red/yellow tone). The captions to the plates show real knowledge of the subjects, in contrast to some of Osprey's other recent titles on Third World subjects. For modellers with a taste for 'villains', it may be added that the plates include portrait figures of both Lieutenant Alfredo Astiz and Lieutenant-Colonel Seineldin. A courageous idea, painstakingly carried through, and recommended. **JS**



# 'Leather Jacket Soldiers'

## The 'Cuera' cavalry of the American south-west (2)

### UNIFORMS, WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

THE ARMS, equipment and, eventually, uniforms of these troops are among the most unusual to be found in the annals of military history. The influences of the pre-Columbian Indians, the North African Moors, as well as the peculiar Iberian features and even those of Louis XIV's Bourbon family were all to be found if one looked at fully equipped soldiers. It was as if they were immune to the usual fashions and influences which prevailed in most western armies. For instance, in Europe lances and shields for cavalry went out of style by the early 17th century and lances only made a come back thanks to Napoleon. But the presidial cavalry had their lances and shield, from the 16th to the middle of the 19th century.

The genesis of much of the above goes back to the soldiers of the 16th century who were fighting the Chichimeca Indians. During the first punitive expedition in 1551, one notes the wearing of Aztec-inspired cotton padded armour. During the 1580s, in

RENE CHARTRAND  
Paintings by DAVE RICKMANN

IN THIS second article, we examine more closely the uniforms, weapons and equipment of the presidial cavalry from the 16th to the 19th century.

order to receive pay a soldier had to own two horses, buckskin thigh pieces, a coat of mail and a helmet with bevor. To this was added a leather jacket (the *cuera*) of several thicknesses of layered buckskin considered the best protection against arrows, long heavy boots, a sword, and either an arquebus or, more commonly, a lance with a bull-hide leather shield called an *adarga*. When not expecting a battle, a lighter quilted cotton coat might be worn and a broad-brimmed hat.

As the 17th century passed, there was an evolution in the equipment of the presidial soldiers. The steel helmet and bevor, buckskin thigh pieces, cotton padded coats and heavy boots were abandoned in favour of the hat and the knee-long *cuera* leather jacket. An inspection of troops at El Paso in October 1684 reveals a cer-

tain variety. The captain is the only one reported with a 'morrion' helmet and an ensign is the sole owner of a coat of mail, all others having a variety of shields, swords, arquebuses, some with leather jackets, some without. An ensign had 'an armoured horse' — presumably with leather — but most soldiers at El Paso simply had 'a saddled horse and three bareback'. Lances were not counted but it is obvious they had them. A traveller in 1697 mentions that 'these soldiers are armed with a shield, a musket and a half-pike'.

As the 18th century dawned, considerable events were taking place in Spain which would have a profound effect on the Spanish armies. In 1700, a grandson of King Louis XIV was crowned as Felipe V of Spain, an event which caused the long and costly War of Spanish Succession or 'Queen Anne's War'. One of the immediate effects of the coming of the Bourbons onto the throne of Spain was a complete reform of the antiquated army. French officers poured into Spain to bring the forces up to date and by 1710, regimental organisa-

tion, standard arms, drills and uniforms were in use.

At first, the *cuera* cavalry were not much affected by all this. The armament, equipment, duties and tactics remained the same. But two important interrelated areas were affected: the command which introduced a system of inspections by a high ranking officer reporting to the Viceroy. The first large scale inspection by Brigadier de Rivera started in 1724 and lasted over three and a half years. This resulted in the 1729 publication of 'Regulation for the best administrative conduct and discipline' of the presidial system. At first these inspections were not frequent, the next important one being during the 1760s by the Marquis de Rubi which resulted in the important 1772 regulations. Thereafter, the pace of inspections picked up.

The second area affected was the introduction of uniforms. When this happened exactly

*A soldier of the Presidio of Monterey in California in 1791. This ink wash drawing was made by José Cardero, artist with the scientific expedition of Alexandro de Malaspina, and gives a rare view of the appearance of the uniform and the leather jacket. Note the decorative stitching edging all around and on the pocket with the arms of Spain in the centre. (Museo Naval, Madrid.)*



*This illustration of a militiaman of New Spain accompanied a 1771 memoir concerning provincial militia by Teodoro de Croix who was to become the first commandant-general of the 'Internal Provinces' in 1776. He is shown wearing some of the usual gear for militiamen and regulars on the frontier — notably the blue Sarape — what we now usually call a 'poncho'. The white hat with a red hair plume shown here was popular among the settlers and de Croix later had his 'Light Companies' wear it. Note also the moustache, an unusual style in the 18th century, but popular with the ranchers of northern New Spain. (Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico.)*





remains unknown. What evidence there is suggests the adoption of a blue garment trimmed with red by some soldiers fairly early. In Mexico City, a resident noted on 3 January 1703 that the soldiers wore a new type of costume which was blue with red cuffs and stockings with a tricorn 'in the French fashion'. Why these colours? Blue lined with red was the livery of the Bourbon family. The new King of Spain being a Bourbon, in came his own blue and red livery for his guards and, rather curiously, for much of the colonial troops as well as the marines.

An Indian painting on a Buffalo hide showing the 1720 defeat of Villasur's expedition, now in the Museum of New Mexico, gives a first clue. The unfortunate Spaniards are shown surrounded on all sides, wearing their leather jackets underneath which most — but not all — appear to be wearing a blue short coat with red cuffs. They also wear the black, wide-brimmed, somewhat square crowned hat which was already one of their hallmarks.

Indeed, in November 1727, Brigadier de Rivera had noted the garrison at Bahía de Espíritu Santo (Texas) paying 'special attention to the soldier's uniforms' but, unfortunately, not describing any that he saw during his inspection. Article 64 of the 1729 regulation made it quite clear that 'all the soldiers were ordered to be uniformly dressed in the customary uniform of the same colour'. This regulation also listed the 'prices to be charged in the *Presidios* for provisions, equipment, and other necessities which must be provided for the soldiers' where blue and red cloth figured along with black hats, leather military jackets, accoutrements, weapons and horse equipment. By then, the dragoon style leather gaiters laced or buckled at the sides worn over low boots or shoes appear to have been in general use. Thus, it is obvious that there was a uniform for the presidial cavalry from the early



18th century and that it was blue with red trimming.

That everyone was in uniform on the frontier was certainly not the case as was noted by the Marquis de Rubi during his inspection. At El Paso in May 1766, the clothing was somewhat uniform being blue with scarlet breeches adorned with silver and gold lace or embroidery but the muskets were deemed useless. At Guajocoilla in late May 1766, each soldier dressed to his own taste or means. At El Paso in July 1766, he noted that the calibres of the muskets were not standard, that the clothing was in 'a deplorable state and not uniform', the leather jackets too thin and thus useless against arrows. Moving on to Janos in October 1766, the Marquis

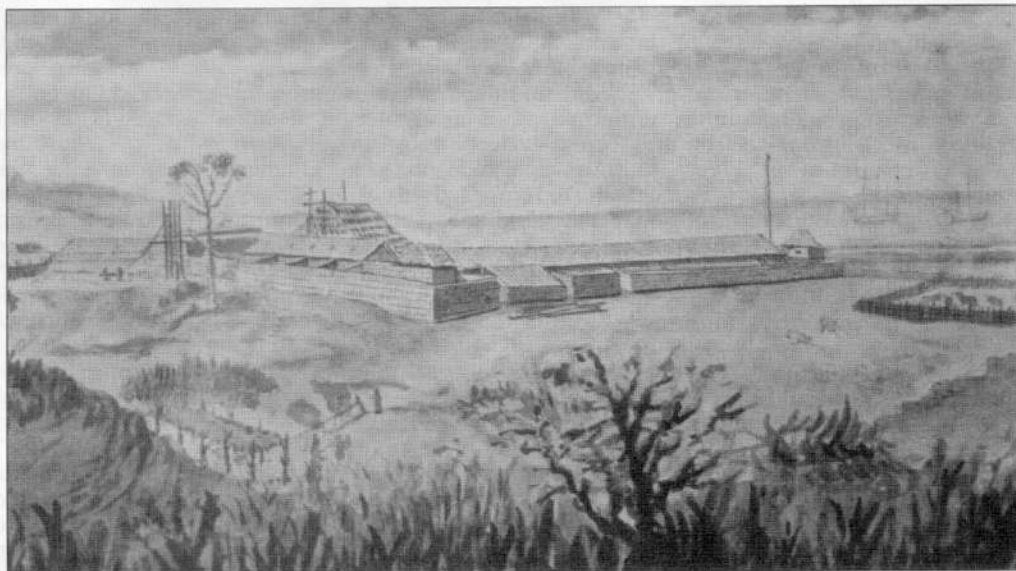
again found some equipment wanting, notably the leather jackets being made poorly: 'the costumes were not uniform for all the clothing of the company' but scarlet cloth was mentioned for lapels and blue cloth for breeches. At Monclova in June 1767, the Marquis finally saw what he considered to be a well clothed company, all wearing a short blue coat with scarlet cuffs with silver buttons and a scarlet waistcoat with white metal buttons.

At this point, the leather jacket, or *cuera*, should be described. It went down to the knees having 'the shape of a coat without sleeves... made of seven plies of white tanned deerskin, which protects against the arrows of the Indians except at a very short

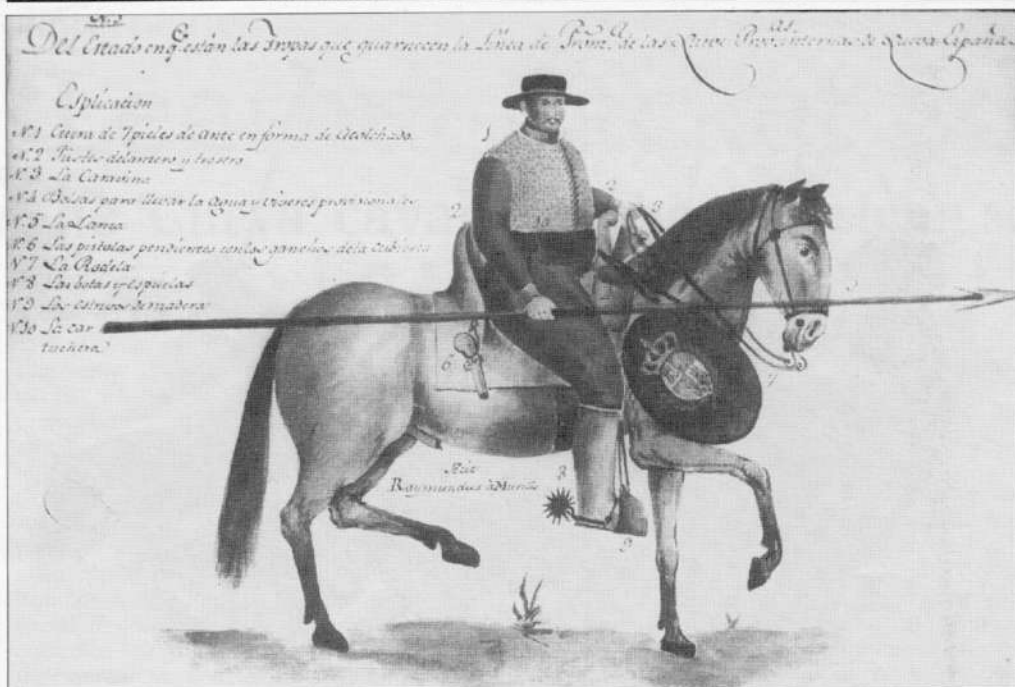
*Presidial* soldados de cuera during the 1774 expedition to California struggling to cross the sand dunes in the present-day area of Yuma, Arizona. This diorama at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County gives a glimpse of the long expeditions of the presidial troops.

range' according to a 1769 account. Supposed to be bleached white, the outer hides might sometime have another hue. In March 1767, the Marquis de Rubi found the leather jackets dyed yellow at Buenavista and of a cinnamon colour at Coahuila. The artwork of the period usually shows the *cuera* as a long sleeveless garment which

*The Presidio of Monterey, California, in 1791 as drawn by José Cardero, artist with the Malaspina scientific expedition. The type of fortifications a presidio could have varied greatly. Some had walls and turrets, others had bastions and embrasures. None were meant to stand a siege by a well equipped European force but rather be the outposts of civilization at the edge of the known world. (Museo Naval, Madrid.)*







A presidial cavalryman drawn in 1804 wearing the dark blue short coat with scarlet collar and cuffs and dark blue breeches. US 1st Infantry Lieutenant (later General) Zebulon M. Pike, intercepted by these soldiers in 1807, has left us one of the best descriptions of these unusual troops: 'The appearance of the Spanish troops is certainly (at a distance) à la militaire; their lances are fixed to the side of the saddle under the left thigh and slant about five feet above the horse. On the right the carbine is slung in a case to the front of the saddle (or pommel) crosswise, the breech to the right hand, and on each side of the saddle, behind the rider, is a pistol: below the breech of the carbine is slung the shield which is made of sole leather three doubled, sewed together with thongs with a band on the inside to slip the left arm through; those of the privates are round, and are about two feet in diameter. The officers and non-commissioned officers have their shields oval, bending on both sides, in order to permit the arrows to glance off, and have in general the arms of Spain with Don Carlos IV, gilt on the outside, with various other devices which add much to the elegance of their appearance on horseback, but are only calculated to be of service against savages who have no firearms...' (Archivo General de Indias, Uniformes 81.)

appears often to have decorative work — in Sonora, seams and pockets decorated with a lining of filigreed leather — and red cloth was popular. Soldier Amador recalled the leather jacket was made in three sections 'like a vest', held together with buckskin straps under the arms, coming down to the knees. A shorter and simpler version of the leather jacket may have evolved in the late 18th century as such a jacket is shown in illustrations. The first commandant-general of the provinces, Teodoro de Croix, did not think much of the leather jacket, finding it too bulky and impairing rapid movement. It is one reason he created the 'Light troops' or light cavalry companies in 1778, which had no such jackets or shields. But governor Cabello of Texas felt, only a year later, than *cuera* soldiers were worth twenty of the light troops. His colleague, governor Ugalde of Coahuila, felt much the same, also having a preference for cinnamon coloured *cueras* in 1782. After de Croix's departure in 1783, the 'Light troops' gradually vanished.

Probably the best known document on the *cuera* cavalry is the regulation of 1772 con-

cerning presidial troops, a result of the Marquis de Rubi's inspection. It was the first document signed by royal authority to specify in some details the arms, uniform and equipment for these troops. Each soldier was to wear a blue short jacket with a red collar and red cuffs, a pair of blue breeches and a blue cloak. A black cravat or neckerchief was to be worn around the neck. There was also a hat, dragoon-style leggings and boots. A buckskin bandolier with the name of the company's *Presidio* embroidered into it was also to be worn. And the leather jacket which, along with lances and shields, made these troops so distinctive in their appearance.

There is evidence suggesting that this simple 'blue short jacket with a red collar and red cuffs' may have had red lapels in some cases. In 1779, the uniform and equipment of the troops at San Antonio (Texas) was considered good and described in detail in an account of the inspection. Each soldier had a blue short jacket with red collar, cuffs and lapels; a red vest; blue breeches; 48 large gilt buttons for the jacket and breeches; 18 small gilt buttons for the vest; a cape; a hat; a black cravat; shirts; drawers;

dragoon-style gaiters and boots. Regarding the lapels, we might add that a 1778 report on the militia of New Vizcaya also mentioned lapels on a similar uniform as above except for silver buttons for militiamen. Armament consisted of a type of musket called an *escopeta*, a pair of pistols, a sword with a sword-knot and sword-belt, a lance, a shield, a leather jacket, a cartridge box holding 24 rounds and a bandolier — presumably embroidered with the name 'San Antonio'. A very complete set of horse equipment was listed along with seven horses (including presumably a colt) and a mule.

Orders issued on 21 September 1780 by the Commandant-General of the *Provincias Internas* left no doubt as to lapels and other details. The uniform of the enlisted men was to be a blue short coat with scarlet collar, cuffs and lapels and gold buttons, vest of linen or of chamois, blue breeches, black narrow-brimmed hat with the brim turned up on the left side, and held with a loop, 'to handle the musket with ease', and a red wool plume; cape of blue cloth, with a poncho also allowed to cover the soldier and his weapons against the hot sun

#### Plate C

**C1** On 21 September 1780, the officers and men of the presidial cavalry were subjected to the fairly detailed regulations regarding uniforms and equipment. The uniform was blue faced red and made of the hard-wearing tripe (shag) fabric, vests of chamois or linen. Hats with the brim turned up on the left side were introduced. Our figure shows a soldier of the Light troops which were assigned the same uniform as the heavier *cuera* troopers except that their hat was of white felt rather than black and that they did not wear the leather jacket nor did they have *ardagas* and lances. The white buckskin *botas* were now regulation for all.

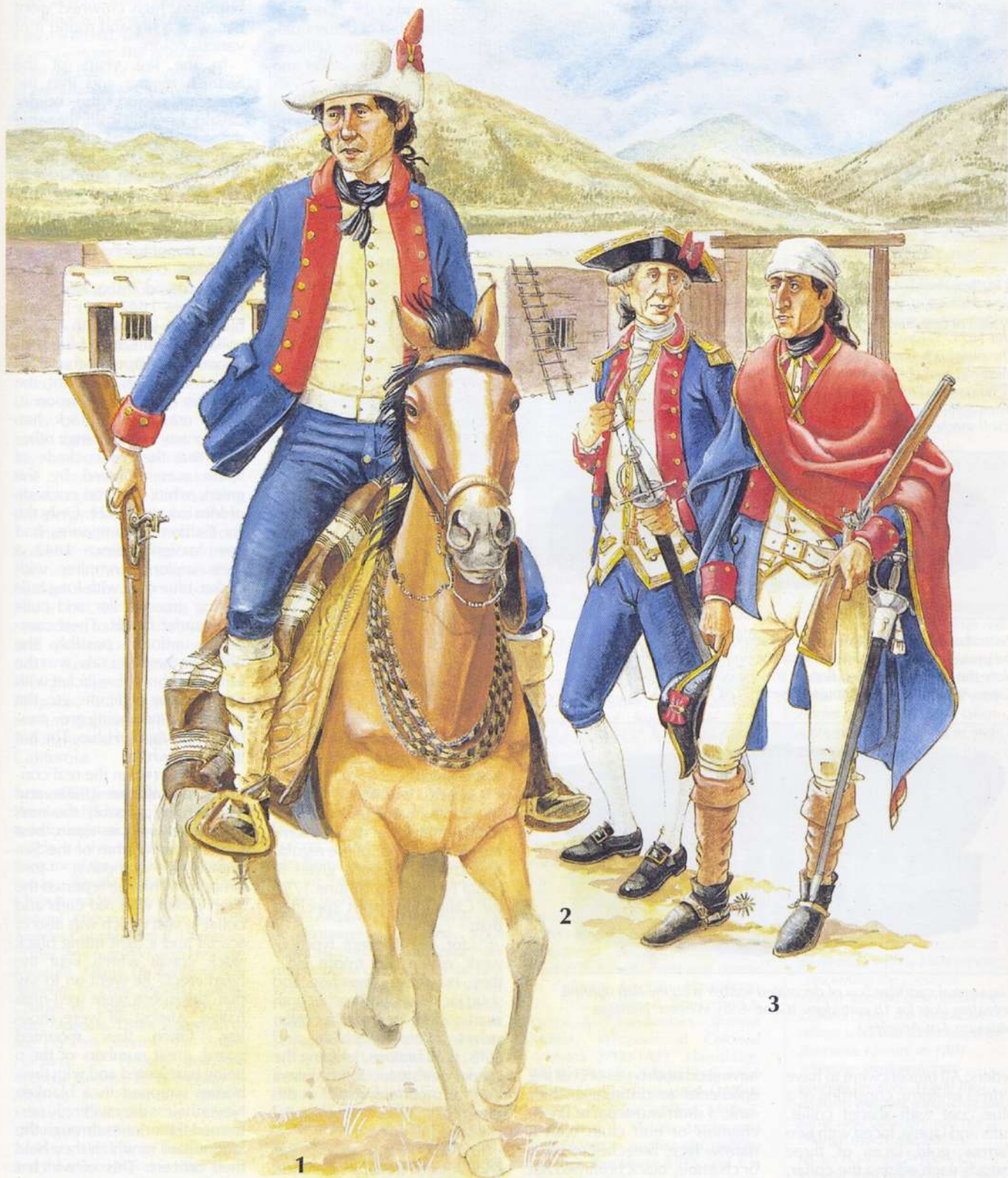
**C2** By September 1780, officers of the presidial cavalry of the *Provincia Internas* were assigned a dress uniform which was very much in keeping with European style. As shown on our figure, this consisted of a tricorn laced with gold and bearing the red cockade of Spain, a blue long-skirted coat with scarlet collar, cuffs and lapels, a buff waistcoat, blue breeches, gold buttons and epaulettes, gold lace edging the coat collar and the waistcoat.

**C3** For the officer's field dress, the September 1780 regulations specified a practical campaign dress consisting of a gold-laced hat with the brim turned up on the left side and short coat of the same colours as the dress coat and a short waistcoat laced with gold. The waistcoat and breeches could be of buckskin or cloth. The regulations allowed the use of a hair net, the *redecilla*, to protect the hair from the dust, but a white or black silk scarf was more characteristic. Our officer is wrapped in a red cloth poncho lined with blue baize and trimmed with gold lace, and carries the short carbine favored by officers. His broadsword was, by the 1780 regulation, to be worn on the waist when mounted and slung from the shoulder when on foot.

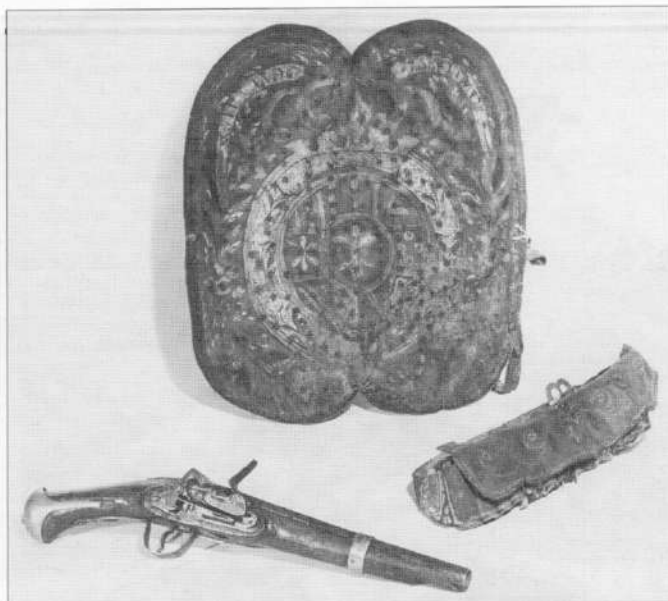
and the rains. The sword was not to vary in length and be carried by a sword-belt around the waist, when mounted. On foot, the belt was worn diagonally over the right shoulder. *Cueras*, shields and other equipment were retained but the bandolier was not to be supplied in the future as it was considered useless.

Officers had two types of uniforms according to these 1780





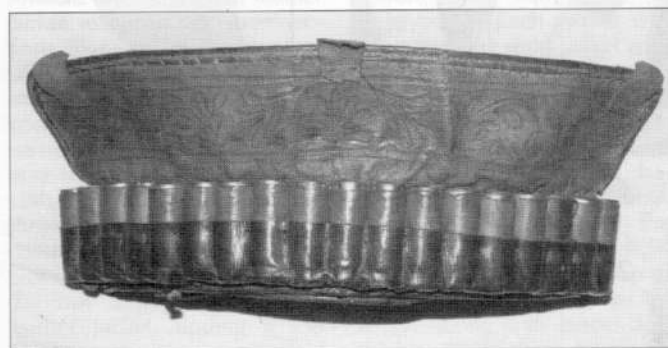




A leather shield, a pistol and a cartridge box now in the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fé. The shield has 'FERNANDO SEPTIMO' written in two scrolls across the top which dates it at between 1808 and 1821. Below is a naive rendition of the royal crown and arms. The pistol is a very crude but solid affair with the remnant of a sturdy Miquelet lock, brass furniture, iron trigger guard, .69 calibre with 1790 stamped on the barrel. The cartridge box was intended to be worn at the waist and its flap is in soft suede leather decorated with scroll stitching.



Ventral cartridge box of decorated leather, probably for an officer of the presidial troops, dating from the beginning of the 19th century. Note the highly decorated flap on this especially fine example. (Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, Los Angeles.)



The ventral cartridge box of decorated leather with the flap uplifted, revealing slots for 18 cartridges. (Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, Los Angeles.)

orders. All officers were to have a dress uniform, consisting of a blue coat with scarlet collar, cuffs and lapels, laced with two narrow gold laces of three threads each edging the collar, blue breeches, buff waistcoat, with gold lace slightly wider than two fingers wide, gold buttons, and a tricorn hat laced with gold. The undress uniform of the officers consisted of a blue short coat with the same facings as on the dress uniform,

having on both types of coat the epaulettes to distinguish their rank, a short waistcoat of linen, chamois or buff cloth with a narrow lace, breeches of cloth or chamois, black brimmed hat with the brim turned up on one side and laced with gold, and a cape of blue cloth. The undress uniform was always to be worn in the field, and during the summer, it could be made of light material in the colours described above. Other items

included optional use of a protective hair net — the *redecilla* — chamois leggings and boots, considered the best with the *vaquero* horse equipment and blue or scarlet ponchos laced at the openings. The arms of the officers were the same as that of the troops and of the same calibre and size, but of better quality and manufacture. Officers also had the leather jacket and shield.

The Light troops raised in 1778 had the same uniform, equipment and weapons but without the leather jacket, shield or lance. According to the 1780 orders, they were to have a white hat instead of a black one, presumably for further distinction.

But the orders of the commandant-general were not applied everywhere and only a year later, in 1781, we find the uniforms intended for the 'California peninsula' without lapels and with the bandoliers bearing the embroidered name of the *Presidio* exactly as specified in 1772. The uniform of the NCOs and privates was officially modified in December 1794: in future the jackets were ordered to be made 'with scarlet cuffs and collars only' and to 'omit the lapels'. But it did not, obviously, affect the dress uniform of the officers although the undress also lost its lapels but not the two gold laces on the collar, which became a standing collar in the last years of the 18th century. The buff waistcoat in the 1780 regulations does not seem to have caught on — at least not in California. There, we read of scarlet or blue waistcoats.

Undress uniforms were sometimes worn according to local initiatives in order to save the wear and tear of the regular uniform. Instructions given at Santa Barbara on 16 June 1797 for California troops specified that:

'...for the different types of work which the troops do... they may use breeches and short jacket of dyed leather with scarlet cloth or *tripe* [a cotton velvet material] collar and cuffs, gold buttons, keeping the scarlet waistcoat for holidays and for mounting guard at the *Presidio*... when they must wear the full uniform.'

In 1807, American explorer and future general Zebulon Montgomery Pike was intercepted by presidial cavalry in new Mexico and eventually escorted back across Texas to the Louisiana border. He was impressed by their appearance and described their uniforms: 'Their dress is a short blue coat,

with red cape [collar] and cuffs, without facings [ie, lapels], leather or blue cotton velvet small clothes and waistcoat, the small clothes always open at the knees, the wrapping boot with the jack boot, and permanent spur over it, a broad brimmed, high crowned wool hat, with a ribband round it of various colors...'

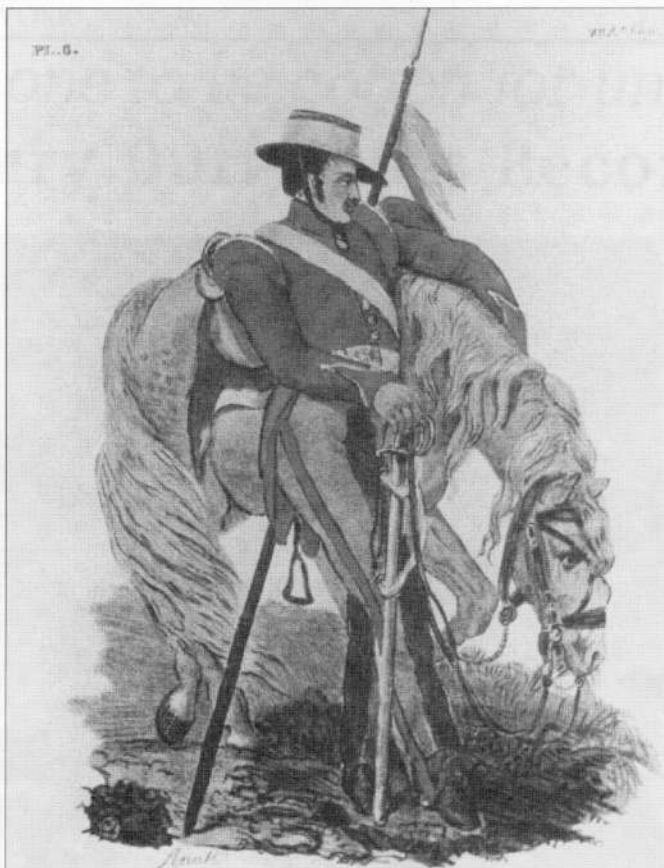
In the last years of the Spanish régime and into the Mexican period, the border cavalry wore basically the same dress as described above. The last uniform description of these troops was published in an official register of the Mexican Army following the US versus Mexico war of 1846-1848. It mentioned that the 32 presidial companies existing until ordered disbanded on 1 December 1847 wore a dark blue short jacket with scarlet collar and cuffs, dark blue pantaloons and cape, leather bandolier with the name of the *Presidio* embroidered upon it, black cravat and black hat. Hardly any basic change other than that the red cockade of Spain was replaced by the green, white and red cockade of Mexico after 1821. Only the six California companies had been assigned since 1842 a dress uniform complete with shako, blue coat with long tails having green collar and cuffs and scarlet lapels. Their campaign uniform, possibly the only one they ever saw, was the same old short blue jacket with scarlet collar and cuffs, etc, the only difference being grey pantaloons instead of blue. The hat band was white.

What was often the real condition during the 1820s and 1830s (and probably the next decade as well) is, again, best told by that veteran of the San Francisco company, José Amador. While he reported the short jacket with red cuffs and collar 'a vest which was also of scarlet and a tight fitting black stock cravat which kept the head erect,' he went on to say that 'the troops were well-nigh naked. Almost all were shoeless. Often they mounted guard, great numbers of them being barefooted and with their bodies wrapped in a blanket. Nevertheless they willingly performed their duties through the kind regard in which they held their officers. This of which I speak was the case at San Francisco.' The same nakedness and suffering prevailed at other *presidios*.

Presidial soldiers were certainly wanting of many items but they often impressed observers. Zebulon Mont-



A Mexican dragoon according to Linati's *Costumes mexicains* published in Brussels circa 1828. He is uniformed in a dark blue coat with red collar, cuffs, turnbacks and wings, the cuffs and wings having white piping, brass buttons. Grey overalls with a red stripe. Black hat with a white band. Lance with red, white and green pennant. This print has been the basis of the uniforms of presidial cavalry shown in several 'Zorro' movies and the television series made by the Walt Disney studios in the late 1950s. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA.)



gomery Pike felt they were 'probably the best horsemen in the world' when he saw them in 1807, an opinion shared by Russian Navy Lieutenant Kotzebue who described an escort from San Francisco in 1815 as 'all very fine and expert men, who manage their carbines and lances with the dexterity of our Cossacks.' They owed their skills, he went on to say, because of 'constant practice... against the incursions of the savages' as well as assisting the clergy to convert the tribes.

Thus were these marvellous horsemen and fearless soldiers. For nearly three centuries they battled, not in a war of extermination but, as they saw it, like crusaders, to bring the true faith and civilisation to the wilderness. And in doing so, they brought the rich and varied Hispanic culture mixed with ancient Indian civilisations to the American south-west and California.

**MI**

#### Acknowledgments and sources

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Manuscript primary sources are largely from the Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Legajos 144 (the 1729 regulations), 270 to 283 (Legajos 273 has the Marquis de Rubi's inspections, 283 the detailed San Antonio inspection), Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Legajos 2599

(the 1804 memoir on the Provincias Internas); the Bancroft Library, California Archives 15, Tomo III, IV (the 1780 regulations) and XII, and manuscript NO D-28: 'Recollections concerning the History of California by José Maria Amador'. There are many published and sometimes translated documents: *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain: a Documentary History*, Volume 1: 1570-1700, and *Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulation for Northern New Spain 1724-1729*, both compiled and edited by Thomas S. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1986 and 1988; *Le Mexique à la fin du XVIIe siècle vu par un voyageur italien Gemelli Careri*, ed Jean-Pierre Berthe, Paris, 1968; Alejandro Malaspina & José de Bustamante y Guerra, *Viaje Político-científico alrededor del mundo por la corbeta Descumbria y Atrevida... desde 1789 a 1794*, ed Pedro de Novo y Colson, Madrid, 1885; Otto Von Kotzebue, *A Voyage of Discovery... in the years 1815-1818*, London, 1821; *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, ed Donald Jackson, Norman, OK, 1966, 2 vols; Sydney B. Brinkerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, Phoenix, Arizona, 1965 (contains a reprint and translation of the 1772 regulations and other documents); *Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783*, ed Alfred B. Thomas, Norman, OK, 1941; *Noticia histórica de los cuerpos de infantería y caballería del ejército mexicano*, Mexico, 1851.

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#### Plate D

**D1** This figure is based on a 1791 ink wash drawing done in Monterey, California, by José Cardero. He was an artist with the scientific expedition led by Alejandro de Malaspina. Some unclear details on the original drawing are open to some interpretation. The soldier is shown wearing the long leather coat with decorative stitching including the royal arms on what appears to be pockets. The hue of the clothing leaves little doubt that the jacket was blue with red cuffs (upon each of which three buttons are to be seen) and blue breeches. A broad vertical decoration on the cuff is here interpreted as gold lace. A line ending in three small balls emerging from the broadfall of the breeches is here interpreted as the merchero, a wick used to light cigarettes which was sometimes decorated with small pompons. The botas de talon worn by our soldier are based on a late 18th century pair imported to California from Mexico, now in the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Made of cinnamon-coloured suede, they are shaped like toe-less stockings, which gartered at the knee and folded over into a bell shape.

**D2** A 1797 order for a 'fatigue dress' of leather jacket with red velvet collar and cuffs and leather trousers is the basis of this figure. This was a perfect dress for the rugged work with horses which must have taken a considerable amount of their time as each soldier was to have half a dozen. No wonder some travellers considered them the world's finest horsemen. No doubt, much of the American 'Cowboy' equipment and traditions were first brought out on the Western Plains by these soldiers.

**D3** This soldier is based on an illustration with a 1804 report concerning the presidial cavalry and the description by Zebulon Pike, the American officer who was intercepted by the cuera cavalry in 1807 when he 'explored' into Spanish territory. While the uniform remains somewhat the same (and basically will not change much) the leather jacket is shown in the short version which appeared about the end of the 18th century. The blue jacket now has no skirts and no buttons are visible on the cuffs. The equipment and arms remain otherwise the same as heretofore. The green leather-covered cartridge box is noted by Pike.





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2

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# 'Not a good one to be gotten for under £10...' 17th Century Buff-Coats Reconstructed

AS A MAKER of historic reproduction artefacts, it is often a great source of frustration to me when reading articles in magazines, such as this one, which describe the activities of various historical re-enactment groups and their attempts to discover more about their chosen period by authentically reproducing their clothing and equipment. More often than not, the article concerned reveals more about the authors' tenacious research methods and general enthusiasm for the period in question, than it does about the actual practicalities of reconstructing arms, armour, clothing, footwear, campaign equipment, etc.

Only a personal view, I know, but you do not often get to hear it from the maker's point of view! Hence the bulk of this article, and others in this series, will not be a complete index of references to existing historical artefacts (some, but not many!), but a discussion of the attempts made to reconstruct artefacts from a certain historical period using the materials, tools and techniques available to the original makers.

Being in the relatively privileged position of making historic reproduction artefacts for a living, I am asked to make items from a wide range of historical periods. But one period in British history provides more commissions than all others combined, and that is the period of the English Civil Wars in the 17th century.

## English Civil War Re-enactment

Re-enactment interest in this period is at a high level, with two large national societies devoted to the portrayal of life in Britain during this tumultuous time. Hence the high demand for authentically made equipment and clothing to strengthen the message during battle re-enactments and living history displays.

Although sometimes denigrated by learned and professional historians, the activities of enthusiastic re-enactors can provide us with a unique analytical looking glass with which to examine various pieces of historical and



Mid-17th century cavalry trooper and officer wearing two widely differing styles of buff-coat. The trooper on the left of the picture wears the 'Littlecote' style coat of simple four-piece construction. The officer on the right wears the more elaborate 'Nathaniel Fiennes' style, double-sleeved coat.

portraits showing officers and men of the guard, complete with buff-coats and buff leather accoutrements.

Yet, if the truth be known, buff leather has been helping to protect and arm the soldier since the early 13th century, when laces and straps made of buff leather were used to secure component parts of body armour together. Further theories concerning the early uses of buff leather are promoted by the late John Waterer<sup>1</sup> who argues that buff leather could easily have formed much of the body armour itself, as worn by fighting men during the 13th and 14th centuries, being both lighter and more flexible than metal plate, as well as being much cheaper to produce.

## MARK BEABEY

AFTER SEEING some examples of his work on sale\* at an English Civil War muster earlier this year, we asked Mark Beabey to explain some of his techniques. Future articles will cover footwear and leather accoutrements.

archaeological information; to experiment with their practical applications and thereby form more comprehensive conclusions about our forebears.

In the case of 17th century re-enactment, much original material in the way of arms, armour and clothing still survives, hence the task of reconstructing certain characters is made somewhat easier. However, it becomes vital to view the original artefact and its reasons for survival over time, in their proper perspective. Did the artefact ever actually see service? Does it represent a practical piece of military equipment? How representative is it of everyday examples of similar equipment? Charles I's gilt armour is

probably not the best example to use when reconstructing the armour of a cuirassier of the line in the Royalist army!

In this article I hope to illustrate some of the advantages and limitations involved in reconstructing certain items of 17th century soldiers' equipment from a very widely used material — namely buff leather.

## Buff leather

Buff leather is a term often heard in connection with the arms and armour of soldiers during the wars of 17th century Europe — the 'buff-coat' being seen as an essential feature of most people's image of a Roundhead trooper for instance, also witness the number of 17th century Dutch

## The production of buff leather

Buff leather is the name given to large bovine hides that have been finished using an oil oxidation process (normally called oil-tannage). The name 'buff' results from the fact that this oil-dressed leather was first manufactured from the skin of the European buffalo or wild ox.<sup>2</sup>

The process of oil tannage in the 17th century began, as with most leather preparation, by first washing and soaking the hide in successive lime solutions to remove all the flesh and hair. Once 'clean' the hide was then scraped or 'frised' to remove the top outer layer known as the grain, thus exposing the middle layer, known as the corium, which contains the collagen fibres that make up the structure of the finished leather.

Next, oxidizable oil (usually cod oil) was liberally and energetically worked into the

<sup>1</sup>Details of prices and commission times available from Mark at 7 Montague Street, Sowerby Bridge, W. Yorks HX6 1EA; or telephone 0422 833565 or 843378.



Rear view of previous buff-coats, clearly showing the greater number of pieces used in the construction of the Nathaniel Fiennes style coat. Note additional buff leather equipment, such as high top boots and baldrick.

hide — sometimes with bare feet in a large wooden tub, in a process known as 'kicking'.<sup>3</sup> The hides were then placed in warm, dry racks for the oxidation process to take place. Sometimes the oiling and oxidation process would be repeated four times. Once completed, the collagen fibres became flexible, and immune to putrefaction and decay. The hides were then given a final washing, stacked and allowed to dry, remaining a very pale yellowy colour, namely, buff. The resulting leather is flexible but tough and does not distort or harden with use.

These unique properties, combined with the fact that the finished hides could measure anything up to 40 square feet, provided the military outfitters of the 17th century with an ideal material for making large protective garments such as buff-coats.

A closer examination of the equipment of soldiers during the 17th century quickly reveals an extensive use of buff leather for a wide variety of different articles, including: buff-coats; boots; shoes; leggings; baldricks; and carrying slings for various weapons. At this time I will limit myself to discussing the use of buff leather to construct cavalry buff-coats.

#### Buff-coat reconstructions

The buff-coats shown in the photographs represent two ends of the spectrum in terms of mid-17th century buff-coat construction and style. The coat worn by the trooper on the left of the picture is constructed in the style of the buff-coats that make up the Tower Armouries' 'Littlecote Collection' which are believed to date from the Commonwealth Period, ie post-Civil War.

#### Littlecote style

The body is made up of only four sections, and each section extends to include the wide, flaring skirt or 'basque' that protects the wearer's upper leg area. This particular coat has sleeves made from two shaped pieces of buff leather, although other examples in the Littlecote collection are sleeveless.

The distinctive yellow



colour of this coat results, in this particular case, from a dyestuff introduced during the final stages of the oil oxidation process, although the original coats show a much lighter colour on their insides and are, therefore, considered to have had a dyestuff applied to their outer surface after being stitched together (the threads also show evidence of the dyestuff). The most likely substance for the dyestuff used would be ochre mixed with either oil or water. This mixture could have served to keep the coat 'clean', as the light coloured and roughened surface of buff leather very easily picks up dirt and grease which are almost impossible to

remove. Therefore, coating the surface would restore the appearance of the coat: a process similar to the method used in later periods to restore the whiteness of white buff leather accoutrements with applications of pipe clay.

#### Nathaniel Fiennes

The buff-coat worn by the cavalry officer to the right of the photographs is based on that worn by the Parliamentarian, Nathaniel Fiennes, in his magnificent portrait that is currently touring the country as part of the Tower Armouries' travelling Civil War Exhibition.

This buff-coat, made from the natural lighter coloured buff leather, is far less utilitarian

in its design than the Littlecote style — hence a more expensive item.

The body section is in four pieces, each of which has a separate flaring skirt or basque stitched to it. The most distinguishing feature is the double thickness sleeves, with the outer sleeves being scalloped and recessed to allow greater arm movement. Unlike the buff-coat shown in the portrait, the reconstructed example does not have a shorter left hand outer sleeve to accommodate the steel bridle gauntlet.

Unfortunately, the portrait also shows Fiennes wearing a white linen or cotton shirt under his buff-coat, complete





Both buff-coats shown open and unlaced, with pairs of long, buff leather laces hanging loose from the neck areas. Note: most surviving buff-coats fasten with metal hooks and eyes, although lacing has proved to be a thoroughly practical option on these reconstructions.

with large, lace-trimmed, turnback cuffs and a lace-trimmed 'falldown' collar, thus totally obscuring the collar and cuff details of the coat! Therefore, in the reconstructed version the collar and cuff details are taken from the buff-coat traditionally that of the Parliamentarian, Major Saunders, and held at the National Army Museum in London. These consist of rows of small, rolled, leather buttons

which fasten either directly through the leather on the opposite cuff for each arm, or separate loops made of hemp thread in the case of the collar fastenings. The reconstructed version has three rolled leather buttons on each sleeve, and three more on the collar, all of which fasten directly through the leather.

#### The two-in-one buff-coat

The obscuring of the collar detail in the portrait also prevents us from determining any further details regarding the actual construction of the

coat, ie, whether it has double thickness sleeves only, or if in fact the coat is made up of two buff-coats in one. That is, an inner coat of thinner buff leather consisting of a short body section extending only to the waist, with full length sleeves. Then an outer coat complete with body section, flared skirts, and scalloped and recessed sleeves, made in much thicker buff. The bottom edge of the inner coat can then be skived and stitched to the inside waist of the outer coat, thereby joining the two coats into one and making a very robust piece of body armour indeed.

The previously mentioned buff-coat of Major Saunders (National Army Museum) is of this type of construction, as would also appear to be the case for the buff-coat of Colonel Brooke shown illustrated in David Blackmore's *Arms and Armour of the English Civil Wars*.<sup>4</sup> The giveaway factor in the case of the two-in-one buff-coat is the two standing collars.

The reconstructed buff-coat shown in the photographs is not of the two-in-one type and only has double layered sleeves, the inner sleeve being stitched to the outer sleeve just below the shoulder seam after having its edge skived to provide a smooth passage for the wearer's arm down the sleeve.

#### Fastenings

The method of closure for both the reconstructed buff-coats is by long buff leather laces passing through holes punched on either side of the chest pieces. As has been noted in several published works dealing with 17th century buff-coats, a more common method of closure on surviving buff-coats is with metal hooks and eyes. Hooks and eyes do undoubtedly make getting in and out of the buff-coat a quicker procedure, but lacing has proved to be a valid method of closure with the two characters shown managing the task in under five minutes, and half that time when the task is shared.

Unless the hooks and eyes are securely fastened to the coat, ideally to a separate piece of thick leather which is then stitched to the coat itself, there is a great chance of the hooks and eyes coming adrift fairly quickly, and the wearer then having to re-attach them or resort to lacing.

#### Linings

As can be seen from the photograph showing the insides of the reconstructed buff-coats; neither coat is as yet lined. The vast majority of buff-coats that survive today are in fact lined, with either linen, wool or silk and combinations thereof. The lining of buff-coats definitely improves the wearing qualities of the garment. The lining prevents the roughened surface of the buff leather rubbing directly onto the wearer's clothing (usually a linen shirt), and also eases the donning and removal of the coat. However it must be said that despite having no linings, these two buff-coats have performed handsomely both on the battlefield and as general protective garments.

#### Construction

Construction of a buff-coat begins with the careful measurement of the individual for whom the coat is to be made. Particular attention must be paid to: the shoulder width; chest; length of back; neck size; arm length and waist. Armed with these measure-

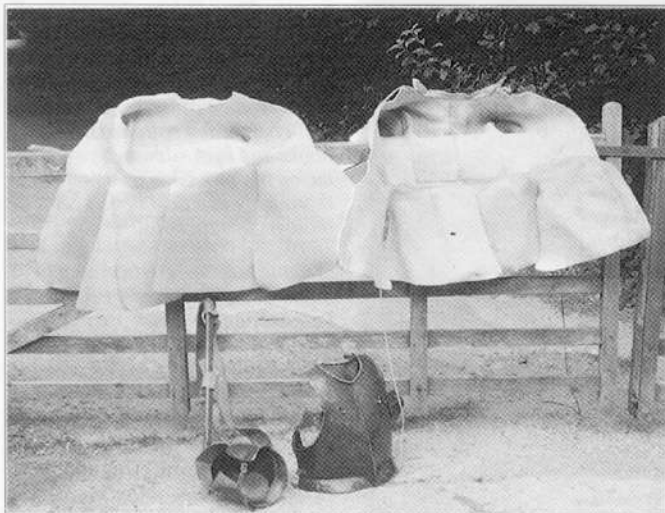
Detail of the collar and cuff of the 'Nathaniel Fiennes' style coat. Note fastening method of leather buttons passing directly through the leather opposite. Also note, in foreground, how the scalloped and recessed outer sleeve aids elbow articulation.



Detail of the lacing techniques used to fasten the coats with long buff leather laces. Note the standing collar, unfastened on 'Littlecote' style coat.







Both coats opened out, showing insides. Both as yet unlined and therefore clearly showing the difference in pattern cutting between the two styles, and also the internal appearance of the buff-stitched seams.

ments the correct pattern may be drawn up (usually on paper or stiff cloth). The pattern pieces can then be laid on the hide of buff leather (the Nathaniel Fiennes reconstruction has 17 separate pattern pieces). Once again particular attention must be given to which parts of the hide are used for different parts of the coat. Certain areas, ie, under-arms and standing collars, require more flexible or thinner sections of the hide than others. Protection is traded against increased manoeuvrability. A typical Littlecote-style buff-coat for a five foot ten inch man, with a 40-inch chest would require approximately 27 square feet of hide, and a Nathaniel Fiennes style could require a further ten square feet.

### Stitching

The stitching together of the various pieces of a buff-coat is completed using the distinctive 'butt-stitch'. This is a stitching technique that allows thick pieces of leather (buff leather is sometimes 6mm thick) to be joined by their cut edges to ensure that no ridges occur along the seamed edge inside the coat. The stitch enters the top surface of the leather, executes a curve to emerge through the cut edge; then into the edge of the section to which it is to be joined; turns upward and emerges again on the top surface. The stitching is performed using a curved shoemaker's sewing awl, used in conjunction with a waxed hemp thread with a pig's bristle whipped to either end. The various pattern pieces to be stitched together are held steady and against

each other by a stirrup strap that passes either over the maker's knee or over a stitching post (the 'maker' would most probably have been either a shoemaker or saddler, as there is no record of a separate leather armourers' guild).

The stitching together of a buff-coat could take as much as four full days and consume in the region of 45 yards of hemp thread. Further work would then be required to line the coat, fasten hooks and eyes (if required), make the button fasteners and loops and fix them in place.

Hopefully, it can now be seen that when John Tuberville wrote to his father-in-law John Willoughby in 1640 saying, '... for your buff-coat I have looked after, and the price they are exceedingly dear, not a good one to be gotten for under £10, a very poor one for five or six pounds...', he wasn't kidding! **MI**

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3. Thompson R., 'Leather Manufacture in the Post-Medieval Period with Special Reference to Northamptonshire', *Post Medieval Archaeology*, No 15, 1981, p171.
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Special thanks to: Andrew Bodley, Curator, Tower Armouries; Mike Fagin, English Civil War Society; Paul Cramer, English Civil War Society; and the staff of Clayton Street Tannery, Chesterfield.

## GALLERY

# Philip II of Macedon

NICK SEKUNDA Painting by SIMON CHEW

MODERN MEDICAL techniques coupled to recent archaeological discoveries and research have enabled scholars to reconstruct the appearance of this great Greek warrior-statesman, who laid the foundations for his son Alexander's latest conquests.

PHILIP II was born of the Macedonian royal (Argead) house in 382 BC and succeeded to the throne in 356. He had had a Greek education, spending three years at Thebes, and while still a youth had shown great potential military talent. On his accession he instituted a number of army reforms (which will be covered in a later article) and embarked on a programme of Macedonian expansion, allying himself with the Thebans in their war against the Phoenicians as well as seizing territory which the Athenians considered 'theirs', and by 346 he had established Macedonia as the new power in northern and central Greece.

Philip needed Athenian naval assistance if he was to take on the vast but vulnerable Persian empire, but he was bitterly opposed by Demosthenes and a war which neither side really wanted was the almost inevitable result. Philip roundly defeated the Athenians at the battle of Chaeronea in August 338 through superior co-ordination of his infantry and cavalry. The League of Corinth followed, unifying all of Greece apart from Sparta, and Philip then felt he could turn his attentions towards Persia. Unfortunately, he was murdered in the spring of 336, but he left his even more famous son a secure legacy on which to build.

### Philip's Tomb

In 1977 the excavation of the Great Tumulus at Vergina, the site of the ancient Macedonian capital of Aegae, uncovered three magnificent tombs. Archaeological research has since proved that the most important of these tombs, now generally referred to as 'Philip's Tomb', houses the mortal remains of the Macedonian king Philip II. The material from this tomb raises the interesting possibility of reconstructing the appearance of this famous monarch with some faithfulness. This article is based upon material illustrated and discussed in the excellent book *Vergina*, written by the excava-

tor of the tomb, the late Professor Andronikos, with whose permission photographs from the book are reproduced here.

Numerous weapons were recovered from the tomb, but not all would have been used by the king. It is clear, for example, that the golden *gorytos*, or Scythian bow-case, is a present made to the king by a Scythian ally, and is not a weapon of war. The gilded greaves were probably presents too. Both *gorytos* and greaves were found separately from the other weaponry in the antechamber to 'Philip's Tomb'. A second pair of greaves, in plain bronze, was found inside the main chamber of the tomb, as were two swords and six iron spear-heads and a single iron spear-butt. As the king is shown in our reconstruction plate, none of these items but for the most magnificent of the two swords has been included. Some of the spears may have been hunting weapons, not military. An iron helmet, an iron cuirass, and a magnificent ceremonial parade shield were also found within the main chamber and have been included in the plate.

### The armour

The iron helmet is an example of the type now generally known as the 'Phrygian' helmet, with a lobate extension to the crown in the form of a Phrygian bonnet. X-ray examination has demonstrated that the helmet is made up of smaller parts which were hammered into a curve and then assembled. Andronikos has pointed out that Plutarch (*Life of Alexander* 32.9) tells us that at the battle of Gaugamela Alexander wore an iron helmet, the work of one Theophilus, which shone like silver. The helmet worn by Philip in the reconstruction painting has been restored as highly polished iron in line with this reference.

Deep oxidization of the outside of the cuirass has obliterated any trace of a cloth or leather covering, but we may be sure that one was originally there. This leather covering would





*The Manchester reconstruction of Philip's head. The work of reconstruction was deliberately carried out without reference to the ancient portraits of Philip, apart from the shape of the nose, which cannot be restored accurately from the skull alone, and the back of the head, which had been heavily distorted during cremation. Two reconstructions have now been made, the first, illustrated here, showing Philip with a livid scar, the second showing his face with the scar healed. (Department of Medical Illustration, Manchester University.)*

have been richly decorated in colour, but, unfortunately, other than the gold trimming to the iron plates, nothing has survived to give a clue as to its original appearance. Thus the first problem in the process of reconstruction presents itself.

The cuirass of Alexander shown on the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii is of a similar type. The shoulder-pieces are edged in red, then comes a band of silver trimming, which can be compared to the golden trimming on Philip's cuirass, decorated with a "lotus flower" pattern in relief. The silver trimming on Alexander's cuirass divides the main body of the shoulder-piece from a smaller rectangular projection at the bottom which houses the mount for the leather thong fastening the shoulder-piece to the breastplate. The large field is filled with an ornate thunderbolt, all but obliterated on the left shoulder-piece. The upper portion of the breastplate is edged with four lines of silver trimming, and in the centre a *gorgoneion* is painted on the leather. The upper edge of the breastplate is hidden from view by Alexander's cloak. Presumably the outline of four silver lines was carried along the upper edge of the breastplate too. The lower half of the breastplate is left in plain white leather, and we may also presume that the less obvious surfaces of the back and side-plates were left plain also. The surface decoration of Philip's cuirass was, we may assume, similar, at least in general outline.



*A few traces of leather lining have survived on the inside of this helmet recovered from Philip's Tomb. Note that the cheekpieces, which would have been tied together by means of the small rings found at the bottom of each, are decorated with a scale pattern. The triangular plate at the front of the crest bears the image of Athena Alkidemos, the protectress of the Macedonian people in wartime. (Andronicos, Vergina, p198.)*

### The likeness of Philip

The technique of restoring a facial likeness from a skull was first developed in forensic laboratories as a means of identifying the physical remains of murder victims, missing persons, etc. The Manchester Museum Mummy Research Project applied these techniques to restore the appearance of Egyptian mummies, and the work on Philip's skull arose out of this project. A notch is clearly visible above the right eye-socket, and traces of a healed fracture have been identified on the right cheek-bone. This anatomical evidence confirms the identification of the tomb as Philip's. The restoration of the appearance of the skull prior to death was carried out by R. A. H. Neave of Manchester University.

When a series of Roman gold medallions from Tarsus was first published by Longperier in 1868, he suggested that one, showing a bearded monarch of the Classical or Hellenistic period, most probably shows Philip, as it is accompanied by a further two showing his son Alexander. This eminently reasonable suggestion, made at a time when no portrait of Philip had been identified, has now been supported by the reconstruction of the skull from the tomb. The most significant variation of the Tarsus head from other portraits showing Philip is in the style of the hair. Here the hair is in thick uniform curls, which is almost certainly an inaccuracy which has crept into the iconography during the Hellenistic or Roman period. All other portraits of Philip show hair which is both less uniform in its appearance, and also much less tightly curled. This is a most important consideration because, although the portrait certainly shows Philip, inaccuracies have been introduced during the passage of the image down from his original portraits to the bust shown on the Tarsus medallion.

### The Tarsus cuirass

The most interesting feature of the Tarsus medallion from our point of view is that it shows the decoration of the shoulder straps and upper portion of the breastplate of Philip's cuirass. Unfortunately, like the hair, the cuirass seems to be an anachronistic feature which has crept in. Roman busts which copy Greek 4th century originals show the head and neck of the individual, but cut off the representation in a cube which does not extend much further than the bottom of the neck and does not extend





The cuirass from the tomb is of the type generally known as a 'composite-cuirass'. The iron plates are held together by hinged joints. At several points on the inside the remains of leather are visible, and there are even traces of cloth. The apron of pteruges would have been attached to the lower line of gold lion-heads. (Andronicos, Vergina, pl95-6).

laterally as far as the shoulders. Therefore, if the head on the Tarsus medallion is copied from a bust, as is likely, the bust is of a late shape, and the details of the cuirass have been added during a later period.

The left shoulder-piece of the cuirass shows a Nike (Victory) carrying a trophy over her left shoulder. This symbol seems to be quite unknown before the 270s when it appears on coins of Pyrrhus of Epirus. The short row of 'scales' at the top of the pteruges are likewise anachronistic. In none of the decorative

elements shown on the Tarsus medallion do we find any iconographic elements commonly associated with the Macedonian royal house. In view of these considerations the cuirass on the Tarsus medallion should be considered a later accretion with no contemporary iconographic value to enable a reconstruction.

#### The ceremonial shield

It took five years of painstaking work on the part of the excavation's conservator, George Petkousis, to reconstruct the shield from a myriad of fragments. The results obtained by his work are truly magnificent. It would have originally been made of leather, almost certainly dyed purple. In the centre of the shield was a gold circular sheet bearing a blazon worked in ivory and gold. The outside edge of the shield is decorated with a complex meander — and

key-pattern in ivory, silver, glass, and gold. At the very edge comes a gold binding. Thus this ornamented shield seem to be a highly ornate version of a hoplite shield. The materials it is constructed from are precious, but it retains the shape of a hoplite shield, and to some extent the colour scheme. The gold 'medallion' containing the shield blazon on a purple field reverses the appearance of the normal hoplite shield. It is worth noting that the single hypaspist shown on the Alexander Sarcophagus has a purple 'medallion' on his shield. Unfortunately, the blazon inside his medallion cannot be made out now, and was perhaps never painted, but it is at least possible that the regimental blazon of the Hypaspist Regiment, or at least of one of the *lochoi* of the Hypaspists, was of the same basic design as that shown on the ceremonial shield.

The purpose of the shield is not immediately apparent, but it is clearly not a combat weapon. Arrian (1.11.8) tells us that when Alexander landed in Asia he went to Troy, dedicated his armour in the temple, and took down in its place some weapons still remaining from the Trojan War, which were henceforward carried before him in battle. During the Indian Campaign in 326/5 Alexander was trapped inside the walls of the city of the Malloi and was wounded. Arrian (6.9.3; 6.10.2) tells us that Peucestas protected Alexander with the 'Sacred Shield', which Alexander had taken from the temple of Athena at Troy and always kept by him and which was carried before him in battle, until he could be

rescued by his own troops (6.9.3; 6.10.2). Presumably the ceremonial shield found inside Philip's Tomb played a similar emblematic role, and was carried in front of the king in battle by one of his troops, either a Bodyguard or a Hypaspist. In the reconstruction picture the figure carrying the shield is based on the soldier shown running alongside the king on the Alexander Mosaic. **MI**

#### Further reading

A.J.N.W. Prag, J.H. Musgrave and R.A.H. Neave, 'The skull from Tomb II at Vergina: King Philip II of Macedon', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984), pp60-78.

Manolis Andronicos, *Vergina, the Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Ekdotike Athenon SA, Athens, 1984).

Al.N. Oikonomides, 'The Portrait of Pyrrhos King of Epirus in Hellenistic and Roman Art, *Ancient World* 8(1983), pp67-72.

#### Simon Chew's reconstruction

shows Philip being wounded at the siege of Methone in 354 BC. We owe our information concerning Philip's wounds to the 1st century BC grammarian Didymus, nicknamed Chalkenteros, or 'Brass-guts', from the fact that he is said to have written 3,500 or 4,000 works, or Bibliolathes ('Book-forgetting') because of his occasional self-contradictions due to having forgotten what he said in earlier books. Didymus gathered together the evidence for Philip's eye wound, which had been elaborated in variant accounts, and tells us that Philip 'had his right eye cut out when he was struck by an arrow while inspecting the siege-engines and the protective sheds at the siege of Methone'. Justin (7.6.13) tells us that 'when he was besieging the city of Methone, an arrow shot from the walls at him as he was passing by knocked out the King's right eye'. Another source tells us that Philip was wounded by one Aster, but the same source tells us, incorrectly, that Philip was wounded by a spear, so this information is suspect.

*The Tarsus Medallion, dating to the reign of Caracalla (AD198-217). The head of Philip, taken from a bust or coin, is accurate enough but for the over-elaborate hair. The cuirass is, however, a fanciful later accretion. It is out of scale and out of square with the head. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*









